An Enlightening Commentary into The Light of the Holy Qur'an

VOLUME 2

By

A Group of Muslim Scholars

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An Enlightening Commentary into The Light of the Holy Qur'an

VOLUME 2

By
A Group of Muslim Scholars

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CONTENTS

Introduction (with notes from the Translator and Editor) xvii
Transliteration xxix
Opening Supplication xxviii

Sura Fajr (Break of Dawn) 1

Commentary: Verses 1-5 3
The Term 'Dawn'
The Ten Nights
The Even and The Odd
The Night
Commentary: Verses 6-14 11
The Lord Watches
Lessons from the 'Ad People
The City of Iram
The Thamood People
Pharaoh and the Stakes
Corruption and Punishment
Commentary: Verses 15-20 19
Trials Through Blessings and Disasters
Compassion to Orphans
Feeding the Needy
Ursurping Inheritance
Love of Wealth
Commentary: Verses 21-26 25
A Late Awakening
Resurrection
How Will Remembrance Profit Then?
Heaven and Hell
Looking Back - Regretful
Allah's Punishment
Commentary: Verses 27-30 29
The 'Serene Soul'
Supplication 32

Contents

Sura Balad (The City) 33

Commentary: Verses 1-7 36
- Do Not Expect Tranquility in This World
- The Holy City – Mecca
- The Parent and the Child
- The Nature of This World
- Powerless Man
- Squandering Wealth

Commentary: Verses 8-10 41
- The Gifts of Eyes, Tongue and Guidance
- Seven Parts of the Eye
- Language: Communicating with the Tongue
- The Function of the Lips
- Guidance: Discovering Right and Wrong
- Blessing From Allah: Self-control

Commentary: Verses 11-20 45
- Unwillingness to Make the Climb
- Success: Allah, Faith and Sincerity
- Helping the Needy
- The Cause of Faith
- Challenge Your Desires
- People of the Right Hand
- People of the Left Hand
- The Suffocating Hell

Supplication 50

Sura Shams (The Sun) 51

Commentary: Verses 1-10 53
- Purification of the Carnal Soul
- The Sun
- The Moon
- The Day
- The Night
- Heaven and He Who Made It

Contents

The Earth
The Soul
Exclusive Gift to Man: Discriminating Between Right and Wrong
Man's Ability to Distinguish
Purifying the Soul is Success
Corrupting the Soul is Failure
Explanation 61
Reaching Salvation
Commentary: Verses 11-15 62
Fatal End of the Wrongdoers
The Thamood People
Prophet Sālih
Killing of the She-Camel
Punishment Fell Upon The Thamood
Explanation 66
Brief Story About the Thamood
Supplication 67

Sura Lail (The Night) 68

Occasion of Revelation 70
The Bent Palm Tree
Commentary: Verses 1-11 71
Value of the Night
Day Brightens Up Everywhere
Mystery of the Sexes
Striving for Diverse Ends
Shahadatain: Formula Recited on Becoming Muslim 74
State of Ease
Path of Affliction
Wealth Will Not Avail
Commentary: Verses 12-21 78
The Choice is Ours
Scale for Happiness
Giving: Without Expectation
Sinning: Not Without Punishment Even for the Believers

Contents

Explanation 82
True Faith
Supplication 83

Sura Duhā (The Gorious Morning Light) 84

Occasion of Revelation 86
The Brief Interval
Commentary: Verses 1-5 87
The Glorious Light
The Hereafter is Better Than the Present
Victory in the End
Intercession by the Prophet
Explanation 91
Discontinuation of Revelation
Commentary: Verses 6-11 92
Treat Orphans with Kindness
You, Too, Were an Orphan
Khadijah, the Sincere, Pious Lady
Repulse Not the Petitioner
Announce the Bounties of Allah
Supplication 99

Sura Inshirāh (The Expansion) 100

Commentary: Verses 1-8 103
Bounties; Numerous
Expanding the Breast
Removing the Burden
Exalted: O' Mohammad
With Hardship Comes Ease
Turn All Attention to Allah
Life: A Continuous Effort
Explanation 110
Caliphate
Supplication 111

Contents

Sura Tīn (The Fig) 112

Commentary: Verses 1-8 114
- The Fig and the Olive
- Mountain Full of Bounties
- City of Security: Mecca
- Useful Properties of the Fig
- Companion of Health: The Olive
- Man: Created in the Best of Moulds
- The Highest Heights or the Lowest Lows
- This Fleeting Life: Exchange it for the Final Goal
- Allah: The Just of Judges

Supplication 120

Sura 'Alaq (The Clot) 121

Occasion of Revelation 122
- Read (Proclaim): The Call to Prophecy

Commentary: Verses 1-5 124
- Lordship of Allah
- Man: Created From a Clot
- Allah: Most Generous
- Taught by the Pen

Explanations 126
- Importance of the Pen
- Two Periods of Man: Historical and Prehistorical

Commentary: Verses 6-14 130
- Think Not That You are Self-Sufficient
- Abū-Jahl
- Allah Sees All

Expianation 133
- Everything is in Allah's View

Commentary: Verses 15-19 ❊ 134
- Prostrate to Gain Nearness to Allah
- Seizing the Sinful Forelock
- Call Your Council: The Punishment Awaits
- Four Suras Containing Prostration Verses ❊

Contents

Explanation 137
Learn Humility: This is the Defence
Supplication 138

Sura Qadr (The Night of Honour) 139

Commentary: Verses 1-5 141
Revelation of the Qur'an: Ramadān Month
Value of the Night of Honour
A Night of Safety
Abraham and the Angels
Explanation 146
Taking Care of Affairs
Which Night is the Night?
Why the Mystery? : A Fitting Philosophy
The Night: Better Than a Thousand Months
Why The Month of Ramadān?
The Night: Same in Different Zones?
Rotation and Revolution: Earth, Sun, and Moon
Supplication 151

Sura Bayyinah (The Clear Evidence) 152

Commentary: Verses 1-5 155
The Religion Right and Straight
The People of the Book
Clear Evidence
Those of Knowledge: Heavier Responsibility
Fixed Principles: Unity of God, Prayer and Alms
Commentary: Verses 6-8 161
Worst of all Creatures
Best of all Creatures
Fear of Allah is Love for Allah
Explanation 164
Hazrat Ali (p.b.u.h.)
Shi'ah

Contents

Intention: Sincerity in Worship
Heights and Depths: So Far and Yet So Near
Supplication 167

Sura Zilzāl (The Quaking) 168

Commentary: Verses 1-8 171
The Earth Will Quake: A Mighty Quaking
Man Shall be Distressed
The First or Second Blast?
The Telling of All that is Known
Faces: Bright or Dark
Deeds: A Catching Up
Explanation 176
The Weight of the Mustard Seed
What is in the Balance?
Pay Careful Attention
Supplication 179

Sura 'Ādiyāt (The Chargers) 180

Occasion of Revelation 183
Yabis: An Easy Victory
Commentary: Verses 1-11 184
Raid at Dawn
And the Sparks Fly
Timing is Important
Kicking Up Dust
The Encounter
Ungrateful Man
Man: A Witness Against Himself
Allah is Aware of Everything
All Deeds Will be Made Manifest
Explanation 190
Two Extremes and Everything in Between
Supplication 191

Contents

Sura Qāri'ah (The Calamity) 192

Commentary: Verses 1-11 194
The Calamity: What is it?
Scattered About in Fear
Destruction of Mountains
Resurrection
Deeds: Are Your Scales Heavy or Light?
The Deciding Factors
Supplication 199

Sura Takāthur (Vying in Exuberance) 200

Occasion of Revelation 203
Tribes of Boasters
Commentary: Verses 1-8 204
Vying Until the Graves
Soon You Will Know
What Joy Have You Indulged In ?
Explanation 206
Ignorance: Cause for Pride
Certitude: Three States
All Will See Hell
Supplication 210

Sura 'Asr (Time) 211

Commentary: Verses 1-3 212
An Oath to Time
The Nature of Continual Loss; the Path to Salvation
Explanation 216
Salvation Through Four Principles; Faith, Good Deeds, Truth, Patience and Perseverance and Enjoining These On Others.
Supplication 220

Contents

Sura Humazah (The Slanderer) 221

Commentary: Verses 1-9 223
- Backbiting: An Unforgivable Sin
- Amassing and Hoarding Wealth: A Source of Arrogance and Pride
- Wealth: A Little God (Idol)
- It Cannot Make You Immortal
- You Cannot Take It With You
- The Kindled Fire Awaits: Shattering Limbs
- And No Door To Flee From

Explanation 229
- Pride: Origin of Great Sin
- Wealth: Should be a Means, Not a Goal
  - Man Should be its Master, Not its Slave
  - Should be Earned Lawfully

Supplication 232

Sura Fil (The Elephant) 233

Occasion of Revelation 234
- No One Can Break the Ka'ba Into Pieces
- Story of the Companions of the Elephants
- Persecution of Christians
- The Persecuted Become The Persecutors
- An Attempted Attack Miraculously Foiled

Commentary: Verses 1-5 238
- A Massive Army Easily Destroyed
- Crushed Like Eaten Straw

Explanation 240
- The Sacred House Saved by its Owner: Allah
- The Power of Allah
- Purposes of the Story
- A Sure Historical Event

Supplication 243

Contents

Sura Quraish (Custodians of the Ka'ba) 244

Commentary: Verses 1-4 245
- Unification of the Quraish Tribe
- Monopoly on Trade
- Security from Allah
- Once a Tribe of Honour; Later Enemies of Islam
- Bit The Hand That Fed Them

Supplication 248

Sura Mā'ūn (Neighborly Needs) 249

Occasion of Revelation 249
- Repulsion of an Orphan

Commentary: Verses 1-7 251
- Denial of the Hereafter
- Do Not Repulse the Orphan
- Feed the Indigent
- Carelessness of Prayers
- Hypocrisy: Lack of Faith

Explanation 254
- Signs of Infidelity
- Pretense and Hypocrisy
- The Value of an Action: Found in its Motive
- Every Hypocrisy is Polytheism

Supplication 256

Sura Kaüthar (The Abundance) 257

Occasion of Revelation 257
- A Taunt Thrown Back On Them
- Without a Male Heir the Message Still Continued

Commentary: Verses 1-3 259
- Abundance of Goodness
- Heavenly Stream: Believers, Quench Your Thirst
- Be Ever So Thankful
- Intention with Divine Motive

Contents

Explanation 263
Value of Female Offspring: Lady Fātima
Three Important Predictions
Allah and the Plural Pronoun ' We '
Supplication 265

Sura Kāfirūn (Disbelievers) 266

Occasion of Revelation 269
Invitation to Paganism Rejected
Commentary: Verses 1-6 269
A Way Clearly Defined
Accepting Idolatry: Impossible
The Statement is from Allah
A Refusal Repeated: There is no Doubt
Can Idolatry be Condoned?
Monotheism: Secret of Unity
The True Way of Islam: Seek Truth
Supplication 274

Sura Naṣr (Help) 275

Commentary: Verse 1-3 277
Victory Belongs to Allah
Causes and Effects
Conquest of Mecca: Greatest Victory
Three Important Instructions
Supplication 281

Sura Lahab (The Flame) 282

Occasion of Revelation 282
A Gathering of the Tribes
and a Scornful Response
Commentary: Verses 1-5 284
Abū Lahab and His Wife: Destined for Hell
Tormentors of the Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.)

Contents

Explanation 288
Prophecy: A Sign of the Miracle to the Qur'an
Nepotism Will Not Help the Faithless
Supplication 289

Sura Ikhlās (Monotheism) 290

Occasion of Revelation 290
Identity of Allah
Commentary: Verses 1-4 293
Allah is One
Allah: Proper Name for God; Used by None Other
Mentioned Almost One Thousand Times in Qur'an
Absolute Oneness: The Only, The Eternal
Has No Partner, No Offspring
Completely Unique
Explanation 300
Basis of Islam: Belief in Allah
Islam Disapproves of Imitation
Cause is Different From Effect
Allah: Known by Glorious Attributes
Actions are Expressions of the Self
Worship Faithfully
Worship is Showing Gratitude to Allah
Supplication 303

Sura Falaq (The Daybreak) 304

Occasion of Revelation 304
A Man Bewitched?
Commentary: Verses 1-5 307
The Curtain of Nothingness Breaks Open
Evil Done Under the Cover of Darkness
The Evil of Superstition: Blowing on Knots
Envy. Most Disgraceful Trait

Contents

Explanations 311
Three Main Sources of Evil
Take Refuge From the Power of Evil Suggestions
Envy is the Origin of Many Great Sins
Take Refuge with Allah From Envious Ones
Supplication 313

Sura Nās (Mankind) 314

Commentary: Verses 1-6 317
Lordship, Ownership and Divinity
The Evil of the Slinking Whisperer
Features Deceiving
From Jinn and Mankind
Explanation 319
Seek Refuge With Allah
Supplication 320

References 321
Index 324

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

INTRODUCTION

"Verily this Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward" (Sura Banī Isra'īl, No. 17, verse 9).

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims, (Sura Nahl, No. 16, verse 89).

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful", (Sura An'ām, No. 6, verse 54).

The Light of Islam is illuminating individuals' hearts in nearly all parts of the world, inspite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an. In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) has said about it: *"...When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell. This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong)...", (Usul-i-Kāfi, vol. 2, p. 599.).*

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50

different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran, alone, and, probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world. This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which, formerly, was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of *Allah* are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. ***'Tafsīr'***. Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal, here, with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences, in our work, to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen. The style of writing, here, is a mixture of British-English and American-English, undertandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them, but, excuse us for using interchangable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; i.e.: **honour** and **honor.**

Not All English Versions of Qur'an Are Acceptable.

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam, in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attepted to black-list the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful, subtle, mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts. The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skillfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the **'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit'** allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve

the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, of course, or even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have sucessfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to *Allah*, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the ***'Tafsīr'*** (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of **' Shi'a '** that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of *Allah*, revealed to the holy Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed. And it should be noted that, ***"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved." (85:21,22),*** whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), himself. This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of *Allah*, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by *Allah*, Himself: ***"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)", (15:9).***

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of **'References'**) which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and, in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a ' Commentary ' ?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers of it to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings, and, it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an

according to his own capacity: "*...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you...*" *(73:20)*. This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us. However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as *Allah* says: "*That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,*" "*Which none shall touch but those who are purified*" *(56:77, 79)*.

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the phililogical changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today. Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous / mutašābihāt / ; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the / rāsixūna fil 'ilm /; those deeply established in knowledge. They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), himself, viz, ***Ahlul-Bait***, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says: "*And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence*" *(18:65)*,).

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations, or, in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions / aṣḥāb / and were afterward written down which are called '***Hadīth***' or ' traditions '. Of course, the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) had openly declared in Hadīth-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the ***Ahlul-Bait***, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul-Bait's explanations and narrations, were added to them and, together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established ' ***Exegesis*** ' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science, in itself, and was called '***Tafsīr***' , commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) on a particular occasion, but, which also hasa general meaning. The particular occasion and the

particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is, also, one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need '***Tafsīr***', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular, have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (a.s.) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsīr; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So, the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujāhed Alhājj 'Allamah Saiyed Kamāl Faqhīh Īmānī, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies. Then, 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and, with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled **'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an'**, begin with Sura

Insān, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Sura is about Man and his creation from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful. However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsīr is an attempt to analize and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an. Moreover, *Allah*, Himself, says: ***"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims", (Sura Nahl, No. 16, verse 89).***

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book, (p. xxvii).

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text, itself. With the help of *Allah*, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that *Allah* accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes. For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like / **amrun bayn al amrayn** / in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like '**prostration**', in English, is rather different with what / **sajdah** / exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and phililogists used and, also, where they were not unanimous, we used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course, are always helpful, which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Sura under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea. The text of these verses and, also, the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul-Bait (p.b.u.th.) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will

Translator's Note:

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here, in this regard, are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any pecular distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial. ***"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance" (20:50)*** .

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of ***verses 11-16*** from ***Sura 'Abasa No. 80***, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to *Allah*. It is always true what the Qur'an says: ***"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise" (76:30)*** .

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, *Allah* willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by *Allah*. Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

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Editor's Note:

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of *Allah* have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of ' **An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an** ' has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the

ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named ***Zarnegar***, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages. Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years ago, now, that, in America, I became ***enlightened*** to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us, as children, that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools, on hand, to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called ***Ayatollah Khomeini***, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland. "***Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,' and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous***" ***(H.Q. 3:193)***.

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Mohammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought ***A. Yusef Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an***, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and, then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary. Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...(***H.Q. 3:42-45***).

And it went on: Practice charity, take care of the orphans, speak a

speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found - no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible - nothing but ***pure*** scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear, to me, that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair. ***"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..." (H.Q. 24:31).***

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on *Allah*. ***"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.' " (H.Q. 17:24).***

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life. ***"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..." (H.Q. 2:256).***

The '***Big Sell***' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce. ***"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will " (H.Q. 2:212).***

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fullfil my desire. ***"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive...(H.Q. 4:95).***

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an. ***"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..." (H.Q. 65:2-3).***

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquility cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that *Allah* does consider me worthy. ***"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light " (H.Q. 2:257).***

Wa Salam

Transliteration of Arabic Letters

Long Vowels		Short Vowels		Diphthongs	
آ ا	ā	ـَ	a	اَی	aī
و	ū	ـُ	u	اَو	aū
ی	ī	ـِ	i		

Letters

ب	b	ط	ṭ
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	θ	ع	ʿ
ج	j	غ	ġ
ح	ḥ	ف	f
خ	x	ق	q
د	d	ک	k
ذ	ð	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	و	w, ū, aū
ش	š	ه	h
ص	ṣ	ی	y
ض	ḍ	ة	ah, at

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

اُدْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَ الْمَوْعِظَةِ
الْحَسَنَةِ وَ جَادِلْهُم بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ
بِالْمُهْتَدِين

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

In The Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful exhortation; and debate with them in a way which is the best; surely your Lord knows best who have strayed from His path and knows best who are (rightly) guided.

[Sura Nahl (The Bee), No. 16, verse 125.]

List Of Suras For:

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an

VOLUME 2

SURA NUMBER	SURA NAME
89	Fajr
90	Balad
91	Shams
92	Lail
93	Ḍuhā
94	Inshirāh
95	Tīn
96	'Alaq
97	Qadr
98	Bayyinah
99	Zilzāl
100	'Ādiyāt
101	Qāri'ah
102	Takāthur
103	'Asr
104	Humazah
105	Fil
106	Quraish
107	Mā'ūn
108	Kauthar
109	Kāfirūn
110	Nasr
111	Lahab
112	Ikhlās
113	Falaq
114	Nās

A Presentation to Muslims

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالىٰ: "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَ أَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَ أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ"

سورة النساء ۴ - الآيه ۵۹

In The Name of Allah. The Beneficent. The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you ..." *(Sura Nisa, No. 4, Verse 59)*

('Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (a.s.) and, at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

فِي إِكْمَالِ الدِّينِ فِي حَدِيثٍ عَنْ جَابِرِ الْجُعْفِي عَنْ جَابِرِبْنِ عَبْدِاللّٰهِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ عَرَفْنَا اللهَ وَ رَسُولَهُ، فَمَنْ أُولُوالْأَمْرِ الَّذِينَ قَرَنَ اللهُ طَاعَتَهُمْ بِطَاعَتِكَ؟ فَقَالَ (ص) هُمْ خُلَفَائِي يَا جَابِرُ، وَ أَئِمَّةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي أَوَّلُهُمْ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ، ثُمَّ الْحَسَنُ وَ الْحُسَيْنُ، ثُمَّ عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ، ثُمَّ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ الْمَعْرُوفُ فِي التَّوْرَاةِ بِالْبَاقِرِ، و سَتُدْرِكُهُ يَا جَابِرُ، فَإِذَا لَقَيْتَهُ فَأَقْرِئْهُ مِنِّي السَّلَامَ، ثُمَّ الصَّادِقُ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، ثُمَّ مُوسَى بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، ثُمَّ عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُوسَى، ثُمَّ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ، ثُمَّ عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، ثُمَّ الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ، ثُمَّ سَمِيِّي وَ كَنِيِّي حُجَّةُ اللهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ، وَ بَقِيَّتُهُ فِي عِبَادِهِ ابْنُ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ، ذَاكَ الَّذِي يَفْتَحُ اللهُ تَعَالىٰ ذِكْرُهُ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْهِ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَ مَغَارِبَهَا

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from 'Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah' thus: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?' Then, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: 'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abitalib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Mohammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see. O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, — Ja'far-ibn-Mohammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Mohammad-ibn-Ali; then

Ali-ibn-Mohammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants. He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (al-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.

(Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, P. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ud-Mawaddah, p. 117)

قَالَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالىٰ: "وَ مَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوىٰ * إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحىٰ"
سورةالنجم (٥٣) - الآية ٣ و ٤

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed"

(Sura Najm, No. 53, verses 3,4)

قَالَ النَّبِي (ص): "إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ كِتَابُ اللهِ وَ عِتْرَتِي، كِتَابُ اللهِ حَبْلٌ مَمْدُودٌ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَ عِتْرَتِي أَهْلُ بَيْتِي وَ إِنَّ اللَّطِيفَ الْخَبِيرَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ فَانْظُرُوا بِمَاذَا تَخْلُفُونِي" وَ فِي حَدِيثٍ آخَرَ: "لَنْ تَضِلُّوا مَا إِنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا"

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and importnt) things: The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul-Bait; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance). Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)". And, in another tradition it is added: "Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these Two."

(Ma'ani-ul-Akhbar, P. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, P. 17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq,Vol 9, P. 309 to 375)

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (a.s.) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment." I asked him (a.s.) how the one could keep your commandment alive. He (a.s.) said: "He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact, if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us."

(Ma'ani-ul-Akhbar, P. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, V. 1, P. 207)

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمْ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Fajr
(Break of Dawn)

No. 89 (30 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

This Sura, like many other Meccan Suras, contains short, meaningful, awakening verses with abundant warnings.

There are several oaths mentioned in the first part of the Sura that have no precedent and are primarily for warning the transgressors about the divine punishment.

Another part of this Sura points to some of the ancient rebellious nations, such as the 'Ād and Thamood people; and also to Pharaoh, the transgressor, and the divine punishment that destroyed them, which is a lesson for all arrogant powers so that they may take careful account of their situation.

In the next part of the Sura, which relates to the previous parts, Man's trial is mentioned and his neglect, in doing good deeds, is very sharply criticized.

In the last part of the Sura the discussion is about the *Hereafter* and the fate of the sinners and unbelievers, and presents a contrast in regard to the great rewards that the believers will receive; those whose souls are at rest.

The Virtue of Studying Sura Fajr:

Regarding the virtue of studying this Sura, a tradition from the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* says: *"Allah forgives the mistakes of whoever recites Sura Fajr on the 'Ten Nights', (i.e., the first ten nights of Zul-Hajj), and it will become a light on Dooms Day for the one who recites it at other times (of*

the year)".[1]

Also, a tradition from Imam Sādiq says: "***Recite Sura Fajr, which is Hosain-ibn-Ali's Sura, in your prayers, whether they be obligatory or optional. He who recites it will be with him (Hosain-ibn-Ali) at the same place in Heaven on the Day of Judgement***".[2]

Introducing this Sura as Hosain-ibn-Ali's Sura may be for the reason that the clear example of the '*serene soul*', mentioned at the end of the Sura, is Hosain-ibn-Ali (*p.b.u.h.*), as the idea has also been cited from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) about the same verses.

Or, perhaps, it is for the same reason that one of the commentaries about the '*Ten Nights*' means the first ten nights of Muharram, (the first month of the Muslim new year), which is closely relevant to Hosain-ibn-Ali (*p.b.u.h.*).

At any rate, these great rewards and outstanding merits are for the ones who recite the Sura as a preparation for their own self-improvement and self-perfection.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 481.

2 Ibid.

Sura Fajr
(Break of Dawn)

No. 89 (verses 1-5)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ وَالْفَجْرِ ○
٢ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ ○
٣ وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ ○
٤ وَاللَّيْلِ اِذَا يَسْرِ ○
٥ هَلْ فِى ذٰلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِذِى حِجْرٍ ○

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "By the Break of Dawn,"

2. "And the Ten Nights;"

3. "By the Even and the Odd;"

4. "And by the Night when it departs;"

5. "Is there (not) in this an oath for those who have sense?"

Commentary:

An Oath to the Dawn!

There are five awakening oaths at the beginning of the Sura. At first, it says:

"By the Break of Dawn,"

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

"And the Ten Nights;"

The term / fajr / originally means ***'break open'***, and since the light of the dawn breaks the gloom of night it is called / fajr /.

We know that the meaning of / fajr / is twofold: (1) / fajr-i-kāðib / ***'the false dawn'*** which rises without extending laterally and appears to be black, presenting itself like an obstacle on the horizon, and is compared to the tail of a Fox whose narrow end is onto the horizon and its conical shaped end is in the mid-sky, (2) /fajr-i-sādiq/ ***'the true dawn'*** and is like a stream with white water that becomes visible, rising, filling the horizon with its whiteness and, thereafter, spreads throughout the sky with a special brightness by which the night ends and the day begins.

It is the time when everything by which fasting would be broken becomes unlawful to the faster, and when the morning prayer can, then, be performed.

Some commentators have carried the term / fajr /, in this verse, to its absolute meaning, that is; whiteness, which is certainly one of the signs of *Allah's* Greatness. It is a reference point in the lives of human beings and all earthly creatures, and the prime glory of the victorious light and the end of faded darkness when the calm sleep ends and the movement of living creatures begins. It is for this very life that *Allah* swears by it.

However, some commentators have said that it means ' ***break of dawn at the beginning of Muharram*** ' .

Still, others have commented on it as meaning ' ***break of dawn on the day of the Feast of Sacrifice*** ' where the important rituals of the pilgrimage to Mecca are fulfilled and it follows close to the Ten Nights. Finally, there are some who have commented on it as meaning ' ***break of dawn for the month of Ramadan***', or ' ***break of dawn on Fridays***'.

All in all, the verse has such a broad meaning which involves all the above commentaries, though some of its examples are more clear and more important than the others.

Some have considered its meaning even beyond this and have said that the objective point for the term ' ***break of dawn*** ' is ' ***any light that glitters in the dark*** '.

Therefore, the glitter of the light of Islam and Mohammad (*p.b.u.h.*) in the gloom of ignorance at that time, is one of the examples of / fajr / ' ***break of dawn*** '. Also, the glitter of the break of dawn for the Rise of Hazrat Mahdi (the twelfth Imam) (*p.b.u.h.*), when the world will be completely darkened by corruption, transgression and injustice, is considered to be another example of this .[1]

The rise of Imam Hosain on the bloody plains of Karbala, is another example, when he pulled back the black curtains of deceit revealing the tyrannies of the Ummayides and unveiling the real face and nature of those devils.

Furthermore, all the true revolutions that have occurred in the history of the world, against disbelief, ignorance, transgression and cruelty are, also, examples of / fajr /.

Even the first light of wakefulness that appears in the darkened hearts of sinners and makes them move to repent, is / fajr / ' ***break of dawn*** '. Of course, this is an expansion on the concept of the verse, while the apparent meaning of the verse has the same meaning / fajr / with the sense of ' ***the break of dawn*** '.

The oath ' ***By the Ten Nights*** ' is generally understood to be the first ten nights of Zul-Hajj; nights which are witness to the largest and most devoted gathering of Muslims in the world, and this is an idea which is narrated by Jābir-ibn-'Abdillāh in a tradition from the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*).[2]

Some have also commented on them to mean ' ***the last ten nights of Ramadan*** ' in which the nights of /qadr/, (when the Qur'an was revealed) are hidden.

Some have meant ' ***the Ten Nights*** ' to be the first ten nights of Muharram; the first Arabic lunar month.

It is also possible to combine these three commentaries together.

Some narrations, containing the hidden meanings of the Qur'an, say that / fajr / refers to the existence of Imam Mahdi (*p.b.u.h.*) , and /layālin-'ašr/ ' ***ten nights*** ' refers to the ten sinless Imams who came before him (*p.b.u.th.*) , and / šaf'/ ' ***even*** ' refers to Hazrat Ali and Fatimah Zahra (*p.b.u.th*) ; the latter term is mentioned in the next verse.

1 Borhān Commentary, vol. 4, p. 457, Tradition 1, narrated from Imam Sādiq (p.b.u.h.).

2 Abulfutūkh Razī, Commentary, vol. 12, p. 74.

In any event, the oath to these ten nights is an evidence of their great importance, since oaths are always made to very important things.

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"By the Even and the Odd."

Commentators have cited many different meanings for the terms /šaf'/ and / watr / ' ***even and odd*** ' mentioned in this verse: Some of them have given twenty meanings, [1] while some others have gone further and narrated over thirty-six meanings. [2]

The following are the most important ones:

1. The objective point, here, is the ' ***even*** ' and ' ***odd*** ' numbers. According to this commentary, *Allah* has sworn by all even and odd numbers. They are figures around which all calculations and regularities revolve, and cover the existing universe. It seems as if He had said: 'By the regulation and calculation' . In fact, in the world of existence the most important things are regularity, calculation and numbers which shape the main foundation of Man's life.

2. The objective meaning of /šaf'/ is ' ***creatures*** ', because they are all in pairs, and the objective point of /watr/ ' ***odd*** ' is ' *Allah* ', Who is unique and has no equal. In addition, created things are all combined by substance and existence which, in philosophy, are called ' ***combined pairs*** ' . The only infinite entity, which is non-material, is *Allah*. (This meaning has been used in some narrations from the sinless Imams). [3]

3. The objective idea of ' ***even and odd*** ' is that all the creatures of the world, in one respect or another, are either ' ***even*** ' or ' ***odd*** '.

4. The meaning refers to prayers, some of which are ' ***even*** ' from the point of the number of ' ***rak'at*** ', and some are ' ***odd*** '. (This idea has been narrated from the sinless Imams ***(p.b.u.th.)***, too.) Or it means the elective prayers of ' ***Shaf'*** ' (two rak'ats) and ' ***Watr*** ' (one rak'at) at the end of ' ***the night prayers*** '.

5. The meaning of /šaf'/ is the day of / tarwīyah / (the eighth day of Zul-Hajj when the pilgrims, in Mecca, travel to 'Arafāt), and / watr / is the 'Arafah Day, when the pilgrims in Mecca remain at 'Arafāt. Or

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1 Fakr i-Rāz: Commentary, vol. 31, p. 164.

2 al-Mīzān, 'Allamah Tabātabāie Commentary, vol. 20, p. 406; Rūh-al-Ma'āli, al-Tahrīr wat-Tahayyur Commentary, vol. 30, p. 120.

3 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 485, narrated by Abūsa'īd Khidry from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

/šaf'/ is the day of the ' ***Feast of Sacrifice*** ' , (the tenth of Zul-Hajj) and /watr/ is the day of 'Arafah. (This commentary is also mentioned in narrations from the sinless Imams).

The main thing is that if the Arabic sign /al/, in these two terms, is used in general, all the above meanings can be applied, as each of these commentaries indicates only one example from the given examples of /šaf'/ ' ***even*** ' and /watr/ ' ***odd*** ' . Mentioning each of them does not mean that it is the exclusive interpretation, but that it is one clear example among the rest.

However, if / al / refers to a particular even and odd number, here, concerning the former oaths, two meanings are the most appropriate. The first is that the objective point is the day of the ' ***Feast of Sacrifice*** ' and the day of ' ***'Arafah*** ', which corresponds with the first ten nights of Zul- Hajj, and the most important pilgrimage rituals are practised, then. Or, pertaining to the oath ' ***By the break of Dawn*** ' ; the objective point is concerning the prayers which are said at the end of the night and before the break of day, which is the most suitable time for praying and supplicating to *Allah* ; particulary when both of the commentaries are mentioned in the narrations cited from the sinless Imams (***p.b.u.th.***).

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For the final oath in this group, it says:

"And by the Night when it departs."

What an interesting concept! The movement of the night is in relation to night, itself, (the term / yasr / based on / surā / ' ***to walk at night*** ' here, is written as an analogy instead of /yasrī/ due to the pause at the end of the verse) as if ' ***night*** ' were a living creature with senses and movement and travelled in the darkness, by itself, moving toward a bright dawn.

Yes, the oath is taken to the darkness which moves to the light; a moving darkness, not a stationary one. Darkness is frightening when it becomes fixed and immobile, but when there is movement unto the light, it becomes valuable.

Some people have said that the gloom of night is moving over the face of the earth and, basically, it is that very moving night which is useful and livable, that is, night alternates continuously with day. So, if night stopped permanently on one half of the globe, both the dark and

the sunlit halves would die.

What does '*Night*' mean here? Does it mean every night or is it a special, definite night? Again, there is no agreement among the commentators. If /al/, the Arabic definite article, is used in a general sense, it refers to all the nights, which, itself, is a blessing from the gifts of *Allah* and is a phenomenon from the great phenomena of creation.

Although, if it refers to a definite night, relating to the previous oaths, it means the night before ' ***the Feast of Sacrifice*** ' when the pilgrims of Mecca go from 'Arafāt to the Sacred Monument, /muzdalafah/, and, spending the night in that sacred place, go toward Mina at sunrise. (This commentary is also cited in some narrations from the Sinless Ones).

Those who, themselves, have seen the view of 'Arafāt and the Sacred Monument, at night, know how thousands and thousands of people move here and there in the same way and feel that night, with all its entity, is moving. The pilgrims, in reality, do move here and there, but the movement of night is so vast that it seems the whole world, heavens and earth are moving. This condition is felt only when a person, himself, visits the place on the night before ' ***the Feast of Sacrifice*** ' and sees, with his own eyes, the exact meaning of this verse:

"***And by the night when it departs.***"

In any case, night, with either meaning it has (general or definite), is one sign among the many signs of the Divine Dignity, and is one of the very important factors in the existing world. It moderates the temperature of the weather. It gives calmness to every creature, and prepares a still and quiet atmosphere for worship and supplication to *Allah*. The night before ' ***the Feast of Sacrifice*** ', which is called ' ***the gathering night*** ', is also one of the most wonderful nights of the year at the Sacred Monument, /muzdalafah/.

Furthermore, if these five items (the oath by break of dawn, the Ten Nights, Even, Odd, Night when it departs) can be considered as relating to the specific days of Zul-Hajj and the great rituals of Hajj, their relationship will be clear.

And, if it is not clear yet, a collection of great events of the divine creation and divine religious rituals are pointed out, which are signs of the Dignity of *Allah* and are a wonderful phenomenon in the existing world.

After expressing these meaningful awakening statements, it says:

"Is there (not) in this an oath for those who have sense?"

The term / ḥijr /, here, means '***sense, understanding***' and originally means '***anything forbidden***', for instance, it is said: 'The judge forbade him to use his wealth'. A skirt is also called / ḥijr /, meaning protection and forbidding others entrance, and since /'aql/, ***wisdom*** ' also forbids man from doing wrong deeds it has been rendered / ḥijr/. The word /'aql/, itself, means '***keeping back***'; therefore, the rope with which the leg of a camel is hobbled is called / ' iqāl /.

What are these oaths for? There are two possibilities. The first is that they are for the sentence of verse 14: ***"Surely your Lord is ever watchful"***.

The second is that what they are for is not mentioned, but means that they are about the punishment of the wrong doers. The meaning may be found in verse 13, in that, a scorge of diverse chastisement will be poured on the unbelievers and transgressors. In this way, the oaths and what they are for can be made clear.

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Sura Fajr
(Break of Dawn)

No. 89 (verses 6-14)

٦ اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ○
٧ اِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ○
٨ اَلَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِى الْبِلَادِ ○
٩ وَثَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ ○
١٠ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِى الْاَوْتَادِ ○
١١ اَلَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِى الْبِلَادِ ○
١٢ فَاَكْثَرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ ○
١٣ فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ○
١٤ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ ○

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Sura Fajr
(Break of Dawn)

No. 89 (verses 6-14)

6. "Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the 'Ād (people),"–

7. "Of the (city of) Iram with lofty pillars,"

8. "The like of which were not created among (other) cities?"

9. "And the Thamood (people) who hewed out the (huge) rocks in the valley"

10. "And Pharaoh – of the many stakes"

11. "Who (all) transgressed in the land,"

12. "And made much corruption therein,"

13. "Therefore did your Lord pour on them a scourge of diverse chastisement:"

14. "Surely your Lord is ever watchful."

Commentary:

"Your Lord is ever Watchful"

The following verses, contain some meaningful oaths about the punishment of the transgressors, of which a few powerful ancient nations are referred to; each of which had great authority in their own right, but were arrogant and went astray. They did not believe and disobeyed *Allah*, and these verses illustrate their painful destiny to show the pagans of Mecca and other similar nations, who were probably much weaker than them, to understand their own status and awaken them from their neglectful sleep.

"Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the 'Ād (people)," ?

The term /tara/ '***see***', here, means '***know or understand***', but since the story of these sects were so clear and known to all, it seems that the people of later generations had also been able to see them with their own eyes. In this verse, of course, the addressee is the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), but, the warning is to all.

The ʿĀd people with their prophet Hūd, are, as some historians believe, mentioned separately in two groups: (1) the first lived in very ancient times and they are called in Qur'an / ʿ ād - al - ūlā / (the early generation of ʿĀd) (**Sura Najm, No. 53, verse 50**) who probably used to live in prehistory, (2) a remnant from the former group, also known by the name ʿĀd, existed during recorded history, which may be about 700 B.C., and lived in Aḥqāf, Yemen at the southern end of the Red Sea. The people were tall and strong in stature and, likewise, were considered excellent fighters.

Moreover, they were very advanced in their material civilization, having lofty buildings in large cities with cultivated lands of verdant fields and luxuriant gardens.

Some others say that ʿĀd is the name of an ancestor of the people, and a tribe was usually called by the name of its ancestor.

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"Of the (city of) Iram with lofty pillars,"

Opinions are divided about the name 'Iram' as to whether it is the name of a person or a sect or a city.

In Kashshāf, Zamakhsharī cites, from some others, that ʿĀd was a son of ʿAus (Uz), the son of Iram (A'ram), the son of Shām (Shem), the son of Nūh (Noah). And since the name of the ancestor of a tribe was used for the tribe, the ʿĀd people were also called Iram .

Still others believe that Iram is the same as / ʿād-al-ūlā/ (the early generation of ʿĀd) and that ʿĀd is the second group of people. Then, there are others who believe that Iram is the name of a city and the land where they lived,[1] and corresponding with the next verse, Iram is the name of their matchless city.

The term /ʿimād/ means ' ***pillar*** ' whose plural form is /ʿumud/.

According to the first commentary it points to the strong pillar-like stature of the people of ʿĀd; and taking the second commentary into consideration , it points to their great, lofty buildings with strong pillars, both of which illustrate the strength and the power of the ʿĀd people, but the second commentary, i.e., the great lofty pillars of their buildings, is more appropriate.

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1 Kashshāf Commentary, vol. 4, p. 747, and Qartabī also narrated this idea in his commentary.

That is why in the next verse, it says:

"The like of which were not created among (other) cities?"

The sense, here, shows that the meaning of Iram is 'a city' and does not mean sect or tribe, and this may be why some great commentators have accepted that this is the correct commentary, and we have preferred it, too.

Some of the commentators have told long stories about the recent excavated beautiful, supposed city of Iram, in the deserts of Arabia, and the lands of Eden, speaking of its high, splendid buildings and its extraordinary jewelry. Of course, they seem more mythical or dreamlike than real.

There is no doubt, however, that the people of 'Ād were of the strongest and the most advanced people of their time and their cities were the best. As the Qur'an says, there was not any city like that among other cities.

There are many stories told about Shaddād, who was a son of 'Ād, and Shaddād's Paradise.[1] These stories are told by people and written in books so abundantly and frequently that 'his paradise' and 'the gardens of Iram' are used proverbially in the language, but they are all myths developed over time which have some roots in reality.

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Then, the Qur'an refers to the second group of transgressors of ancient times and says:

"And the Thamood (people) who hewed out the (huge) rocks in the valley"

The Thamood were among the most ancient of people, and whose prophet and warner was Sālih. They lived in a land between Medina and Damascus named / wādī - al - qurā / and had an advanced civilized life with comfortable houses and lofty buildings.

Some have said that '***Thamood***' was the name of the father of the tribe and so, they took their name from him.

The term / jābū / is originally from / jaubah / which means ' ***low land*** ' , so, it is used with the sense of ' ***to split, cleave, or cut out any piece of land*** '. An answer is called /jawāb/ because it cleaves the air when it comes out from the mouth of the speaker and reaches the ears of the listener, or because it carves out a question and puts an end to it.

1 Hayāt-al-Qulūb, vol. 1, p. 107.

In any case, here, it means cutting the rocks of the mountains and making safe and sound houses as **Sura Hijr, No. 15, verse 82** says about the Thamood people: "***Out of the mountains did they hew (their) edifices , (considering themselves) secure.***" Similar to this idea, it is also mentioned in **Sura Shu'arā, No.26, verse 149**: "***And you hew houses out of the mountains exultingly***", but here the word / fārihīn / ' ***exultingly*** ' is an evidence to show that they lived with pleasure and were making merry in those houses.

Some have said that the Thamood were the first people who carved the rocks and produced firm houses inside the mountains for themselves to live in.

The term / wād /, which was originally / wādī /, means ' ***river bed, or flood route*** ' and sometimes it has been used with the meaning of '***valley***' since the flood waters pass through valleys at the base of the mountains.

Here, the second meaning is more apt to explain the word, because as it is understood about these people, from the verses of the Qur'an and also from the above verse, they used to build their houses in the mountain sides to make safer living quarters.

A tradition from the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) says that on his way to the North of Arabia, riding on horse back for the battle of Tabūk, he reached the valley of Thamood, and ordered the others to make haste, because they were in a cursed land. [1]

Undoubtedly, the Thamood had an advanced civilization with grandiose cities in their time, but, the descriptions written about them are exaggerated and mythical. For example, some commentators have written that they had one thousand seven hundred (1700) cities all made of stone.

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Then, the third group is spoken about:

"***And Pharaoh – of the many stakes***"

The meaning, in the form of a question, is: 'Did you see what *Allah* did to the Pharaohs who were powerful, but transgressed and were cruel? '.

The term /autād/ is the plural form of /watad/ which means '***peg or stake***'.

1 Rūh-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 425.

The reason why Pharaoh was called /ðī-'l-autād/ '*of the many stakes*' has three different intepretations:

The first is that he possessed a large army, many of whom used to live in tents. The army tents were made firm and stable by using stakes.

The second is that Pharaoh persecuted those whom he hated by ordering that their hands and feet be fastened to the ground with stakes; or that they be laid on a piece of wood and their hands and feet nailed to it with stakes, and thereby confining them and leaving them to die.

This commentary is mentioned in a tradition from Imam Sādiq. [1] As it is understood from history, Pharaoh even persecuted and killed his wife, 'Āsiyah, in the same manner, when she followed on the path of Moses and confessed the faith.

The third is that '*many stakes*' means '*a large army camp ready to fight*'.

Of course, these three interpretations do not contradict each other and all of them may be combined in the meaning of the verse.

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In conclusion, referring to the behavior of these three groups, it says:

"Who (all) transgressed in the land,"

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"And made much corruption therein,"

Corruption, which consists of any tyranny, transgression, cruelty and lust, was, in fact, one of the results of their disobedience, and any disobedient people will finally sink entirely into the depths of corruption.

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Then, in a meaningful, but short sentence, it points to the painful punishment of all those groups, saying:

"Therefore did your Lord pour on them a scourge of diverse chastisement"

The term /ṣaut/ means '*a scourge*' but orginally meant '*to mingle*', then it has been used in the sense of '*a whip*' (woven with strips of leather and the like). Some have resembled it to a kind of punishment which will be mingled with the flesh and blood of Man, and which causes him extreme pain.

1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 571, Tradition, 6; 'Ilal-ush-Sharāyi'.

Hazrat Ali *(p.b.u.h.)* says in one of his sermons: *"By Allah Who sent the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) with faith and truth, you will be severely examined as if vigorously shaken through a sieve, and thoroughly blended as if stirred in a cooking pot"*. [1]

The term / ṣabb / originally means ' *to pour water* ' and, here, it refers to the graveness and continuity of the punishment. It may refer to the clearing from the land of these disobedient ones. But, on the whole, from all the meanings of / saūt / the first one, i.e., ' *scourge* ' is the most suitable. It is a term that is also used in current vocabulary.

This short statement illustrates the various chastisements which were cast on those groups of people. The 'Ād people were destroyed by a terrible blast of cold wind, as the Qur'an says: " *And 'Ād , they were destroyed by a furious Wind exceedingly violent* ", (**Sura Ḥāqqah, No. 69, verse 6**).

About the Thamood, it says: "*But the Thamood, - they were destroyed by a terrible Storm of thunder and lightning!* " (**Sura Ḥāqqah, No. 69, verse 5**).

The Pharaoh and his men were utterly drowned in the Nile River: "... *and We drowned them all* ", (**Sura Zukhruf, No. 43, verse 55**).

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Finally, as a warning to all, it says:

"Surely your Lord is ever watchful."

The term / mirṣād / is derived from / raṣada / which means ' *lie in wait*' and also ' *an ambush, or a place of observation* ' . It is usually used for a place where persons have to travel through a pass in which someone is lying in wait to strike them. On the whole, it means that no one should think that he can escape from the divine punishment, because all are under His authority and Power and whenever He wills, He may administer His punishment.

It is obvious that *Allah* is not confined to a particular place and time and does not lie in wait in a pass, but, it means that His Power is over all transgressors, tyrants and sinners. On this subject, a traditon from Hazrat Ali *(p.b.u.h.)* says: "*Surely your Lord is capable of recompensing the doers of sin for their evil deeds*". [2]

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1 Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Sermon 16 (Arabic Version).

2 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 487.

A tradition from Imam Sādiq *(p.b.u.h.)* says: " */mirsād/ is a bridge on ' the Way over Hell ' on which a person who has transgressed another person cannot pass.*". [1]

In fact, the divine ambush is not limited merely to the *Hereafter* and that known passageway over Hell, it is also watchful of the transgressors in this world. The punishment cast on the aforementioned three groups of people is an illustration of this.

The term /rabbika/ ' *your Lord* ' touches on the meaning that *'Allah's* law, for the punishment of the ancient, arrogant nations, is also true for every sect including one's own ' , which is a solace for the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) and the believers, both, to know that their spiteful enemies cannot escape from the wrath of *Allah* and the disbelievers should also know that those who are more powerful and miserly than themselves can be destroyed easily by a violent storm, a sound or even lightning. Then, by doing their wrong actions, how do they think that they can be saved from divine punishment?

In a tradition from the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)*, it says: " ***Rūh - al - Amīn (Gabriel) informed me that at the time when Almighty Allah gathers, in the Hereafter, all creatures from the earliest ones to the latest ones, He will bring Hell nigh and set /sirāt/ 'the way' over it. The way is thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword, and there are three bridges over it. On the first bridge honesty, grace and affection are waiting; on the second one, prayer; and on the third, Justice of the Lord of the worlds.***"

"***All people will be ordered to pass over it, then those who had been dishonest and cruel will stop on the first bridge, and those who had been neglectful in their prayers will stop on the second bridge, and those who finally pass on to the third will be faced with the Justice of Allah. This is the meaning of (the verse:) ' Surely your Lord is ever watchful ' ***".

In one of his sermons, Hazrat Ali *(p.b.u.h.)* says: " ***If Allah has allowed time and opportunities to any tyrant, it does not mean that He has completely lost control over him. He can wait before bringing down His punishment which none can escape and no one can offer protection from it, not even death...***" . [2]

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 487.

2 Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Sermon 100. (Arabic Version).

Sura Fajr
(Break of Dawn)

No. 89 (verses 15-20)

١٥ فَاَمَّا الْاِنْسَانُ اِذَا مَا ابْتَلٰهُ رَبُّهٗ فَاَكْرَمَهٗ وَنَعَّمَهٗ فَيَقُوْلُ
رَبِّىْٓ اَكْرَمَنِ ○
١٦ وَاَمَّآ اِذَا مَا ابْتَلٰهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهٗ فَيَقُوْلُ رَبِّىْٓ اَهَانَنِ ○
١٧ كَلَّا بَلْ لَّا تُكْرِمُوْنَ الْيَتِيْمَ ○
١٨ وَلَا تَحٰٓضُّوْنَ عَلٰى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِيْنِ ○
١٩ وَتَاْكُلُوْنَ التُّرَاثَ اَكْلًا لَّمًّا ○
٢٠ وَّتُحِبُّوْنَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا ○

15. "And as for man, whenever his Lord tries him and honours him, and blesses him, he says, 'My Lord has honoured me'."

16. "But when He tries him and straitens for him his subsistence, he says, 'My Lord has disgraced me' ."

17. "Nay! but you honour not the orphans!"

18. "Nor do you encourage one another to feed the needy !"

19. "And you devour the inheritance – all with greed,"

20. "And you love wealth with (an) ardent love."

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Commentary:

Do Not Be Proud of Receiving His Blessings Nor Disappointed When He Puts You in Dire Straights.

After the previous verses, which are full of warning to the oppressors and threaten them by mentioning the divine punishments, the following verses refer to the divine trials as a scale for His rewards and punishments. Trial is considered as one of the most important concerns in Man's life.

"And as for man, whenever his Lord tries him and honours him, and blesses him, he says, 'My Lord has honoured me'."

One does not realize that the trials from *Allah* are sometimes given through blessing and sometimes occur through disaster. Neither the abundance of blessings should cause Man to be proud nor should disasters make him disappointed, but impatient Man forgets the essence of the trial in both cases and when he receives the blessings of *Allah* he thinks that He has honoured him and that the blessings are the sign of that honouring.

It is noteworthy that in the first verse it says: *Allah* ' ***honours him and blesses him*** ' , but at the end of the verse Man is scorned because of feeling himself honoured by Him. This is for the reason that in the first case of honouring it means ' ***Bounty*** ' and the second means '***Nearness to Allah*** '.

But, when He tries him and puts him in dire straights for his subsistence, he says:

"My Lord has disgraced me."

Despair covers him thoroughly and he becomes disturbed and displeased with *Allah,* forgetting that these are some of the ways *Allah* tests him; a trial in which is the key to Man's development and, consequently, causes him to deserve rewards, and if he disobeys, causes him to deserve punishment.

These two verses warn that neither the blessing is the reason for the proximity to *Allah,* nor is adversity and the lack of blessings the evidence of being far from Him. They are but diverse factors by which *Allah,* according to His Wisdom, examines people. It is the human being who sometimes becomes proud, and sometimes hopeless, because

of his limited capacity to understand and endure.

Sura Fussilat, No. 41, verse 51 also says: "***When We bestow favours on man, he turns away, and gets himself remote on his side (instead of coming to Us) and when Evil seizes him, (he comes) full of prolonged prayer!***".

Also, **Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 9** says: "***If We give man a taste of Mercy from Ourselves, and then withdraw it from him. Behold ! He is in despair and (falls into) blasphemy.***".

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These two verses, in addition to relating the various kinds of divine trials, also conclude that one being blessed abundantly or being deprived of some blessings by *Allah*, is not a sign of special favour and high rank for him or a disgrace for him, but the only standard has always, and in all respects, been '***Faith*** with ***Virtue***'.

There have been many prophets who were involved in diverse kinds of tasks and calamities in this world, and in contrast, there have been many cruel pagans who possessed every kind of facility in this life. This is the nature of life in the present world. By the way, this verse also points, indirectly, to the philosophy of the existence of disasters and painful events.

Then attention is paid to the deeds that cause Man to be far away from *Allah* and to be caught in the grips of His punishment. Pointing to the fact that wealth is not evidence to the high rank of a person with *Allah*, it says:

"Nay! But you honour not the orphans!".

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"Nor do you encourage one another to feed the needy!"

It is worth noting that the verse does not speak about '***feeding the orphans***', but it speaks about '***honouring the orphans***'. This is because the subject matter about an orphan is not only his hunger, but that sympathy, as a remedy for his deficiencies, is more important than his hunger, alone. An orphan should not be put in conditions which make him feel misery and worthlessness, just because of his being orphaned. He should be respected and honoured so that he does not feel the lack of his parents. That is why in some Islamic texts, affection and sympathy for orphans is considered especially important.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sādiq (***p.b.u.h.***) says: "***There is no***

servant who touches an orphan's head, affectionately, except that Allah will bestow on him, on the Day of Judgement, as many rays (of blessings) as the number of the orphan's hair. [1]

Also, **Sura Duhā, No. 93, verse 9** says: *"Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness"*.

This is just opposite to the treatment that ignorant people in the faithless ancient societies showed, and also the same is true, today, in the disbelieving, modern ones which not only use different schemes and make various tricks to, oppressively, take the orphan's property, but, abandon him in the society so that he tastes his plight in the most bitter of ways.

As is understood from what was said, respecting an orphan is not limited to preserving his property, but, according to some commentaries, it has a broader meaning which covers both that sense and many other matters.

The term / tahāḍḍūn / is based on / haḍḍ / which means ' *to incite anyone* ', denoting that feeding the indigent is not enough, but people ought to encourage each other to do this good deed until the time when it actually becomes a custom in the society.

In **Sura Hāqqah, No. 69, verses 33-34** the subject is counted as being parallel to the lack of faith in Almighty *Allah*, thus: *"This was he, that would not believe in Allah Most High," "And would not encourage the feeding of the indigent"*.

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Then, pointing to their third disgraceful action and reproaching them, it says:

"And you devour the inheritance – all with greed,"

Surely, devouring the lawful inheritance is not blameworthy, so, the reproach, in this verse, may be for one of the following:

1. It means ' *to assemble the wealth of one's own and that of others* ', because the term / lamm/ originally means ' *to assemble, to collect* ' , and some commentators such as Zamakhsharī in his book ' *Kashshāf* ', have commented on it especially with the sense of ' *the collection of lawful and unlawful wealth* '. In particular, the pre-Islamic Arabs used to disinherit women, children and minors. They collected their interests and took it

1 Bahār-al-Anwār, vol. 15, p. 120 (old edition).

all for themselves as if it were their own inheritance. They believed that only those who were fighters and strong enough to take part in plunders should inherit property, since most of their wealth would be gained through plunder and pillage.

2. Whenever they inherited property, in their own right, they did not usually donate anything to the poor and the deprived members of their society. When they donated nothing from the inherited property for which they suffered naught, they will certainly have economic excess to the income which they earned by effort and endeavour. This is a great shame.

3. It means '***devouring the orphan's inheritance and the rights of the minors***' and there have been many examples of some selfish disbelieving persons who, having an opportunity of receiving an inheritance, pay no attention to orphans or minors' interests, and take the most advantage of the property of these defenceless persons. This is the greatest defect and the most disgraceful sin.

However, all three commentaries can be considered together.

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Then, the fourth despicable trait of theirs is mentioned:

"And you love wealth with (an) ardent love."

They are worldly, mammonish people who love amassing wealth. Such people surely do not care whether the wealth is lawful or unlawful and, of course, never pay the rights of *Allah*, or do not pay them completely. Also, such people whose hearts are occupied, completely, by the love of money, cannot have the love of *Allah* in their hearts, either.

Thus, after mentioning Man's trial by blessing and disaster, the Holy Qur'an directs our attention to the fourth great examination in which these sinful people failed. The examinations are about the treatment toward orphans, feeding the needy, devouring the lawful and unlawful interests of inheritance, and finally, the trial of gathering wealth without any regard for the limits.

It is interesting to note that all these trials are monetary and, in fact, if one passes the financial trials, other trials will be easy for him.

It is the wealth of this world that causes Faith to decay, and the greatest faults found in human beings are based on this.

There are some people who are trustworthy with a limited amount

of wealth, but when the amount is great they tend to surrender to the temptations of Satan and commit treason. The real believers are those, who under any condition and with any amount of wealth, are honest and observe the rights of others, whatever they are (obligatory or recommended). These are those who are believers and are virtuous. They are trustworthy and pious, indeed, and can be counted as the best of friends. They are also pure and honourable in other affairs aside from financial ones. The emphasis in the above verse, regarding financial trials, is for the same reason.

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Sura Fajr
(Break of Dawn)

No. 89 (verses 21-26)

٢١ كَلَّآ إِذَا دُكَّتِ ٱلْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ○
٢٢ وَجَآءَ رَبُّكَ وَٱلْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا ○
٢٣ وَجِآئَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ وَأَنَّىٰ لَهُ ٱلذِّكْرَىٰ ○
٢٤ يَقُولُ يَٰلَيْتَنِى قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِى ○
٢٥ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُۥٓ أَحَدٌ ○
٢٦ وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُۥٓ أَحَدٌ ○

21. "Nay! When the earth is crushed with crushing upon crushing,"

22. "And comes (the command of) your Lord and the angels in ranks arrayed,"

23. "And Hell, That Day, is brought (face to face). – on That Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?"

24. "He will say: O, would that I had forwarded (good deeds) for (this) my life!"

25. "For none can punish like His punishment on That Day,"

26. "Nor can anyone bind like His binding. "

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Commentary:

They Will Awaken On a Day When It Is Too Late.

In the former verses the transgressors who love the wealth of the world and oppress the rights of others are described. In these verses the oppressors are warned that there will be a ***Reckoning Day*** and a violent punishment waiting for them, so, they should expect it.

At first it says: "***Nay!***", that is, it is not as they think such that there will be no record and a ***Reckoning Day,*** and they should not think that the worldly property which *Allah* has given them is for their honouring and not for their trial. Then it continues:

"***...When the earth is crushed with crushing upon crushing,***"

The term /dakk/ originally means ' ***a level land*** ' so, then, it is used in the sense of ' ***to pound the hills and buildings level, into dust*** ' , and /dakkih/ is ' ***a platform leveled and flat for sitting*** '. The repetition of /dakk/, in the verse, is for emphasis.

On the whole, the idea touches on the earthquakes and the horrible events at the end of this world and the beginning of the ***Ressurrection.*** There will be such a great revolution in all creatures that all mountains cleave asunder and the land will be leveled and smooth as **Sura Taha, No. 20, verses 105-107** say: ***"They ask thee concerning the Mountains: Say, 'My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust;" "He will leave them as plains smooth and level," "Nothing crooked, or curved with thou see in their place'."***

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When the first stage of the ***Resurrection*** ends, that is, after the dissolution of the world, the second stage will begin and all human beings will return to life again, they will be present for the Divine Judgement:

"***And comes (the command of) your Lord and the angels in ranks arrayed***".

The angels will surround all who are attending the gathering place of resurrection to carry out *Allah's* command to them.

This is an outline on the glory and greatness of That Day and the inability of Man to escape from the grips of Justice.

The term /jā'a rabbuka/ ' ***your Lord comes*** ' means that the command of the Lord comes for verifying Mankind's reckoning.

Or, it means that the signs of the appearance of *Allah's* Glory and Greatness come.

Or, still, it means that the appearance of the knowledge of *Allah* will come on That Day in such a way that no one can deny it, in so much as all will see His Supreme Being with their own eyes. In any case, it is certain that His coming does not mean a material coming which would mean that He has a body and needs space to move in; He is far superior to that of having bodily properties.

This very idea is mentioned in a tradition from Imam Ali-ibn-Mūsā-al-Rizā *(p.b.u.h.)*. [1]

A witness to this commentary is **Sura Nahl, No. 16, verse 33** which says: ***"Do the (ungodly) wait until the angels come to them, or there comes the command of the Lord (for their doom)?"***.

The term / saffan saffā / ' ***in ranks arrayed*** ' points to the idea that the angels will enter the ***Hereafter*** in different rows, or perhaps the angels, of every heaven, will be in a row and surround the human beings there.

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"And Hell, That Day, is brought (face to face), — on That Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?"

It is understood, from this verse, that Hell is movable and approaches the wrongdoers, the same as Heaven does for the Righteous: ***"To the righteous, the Garden will be brought near"***, (**Sura Shu'arā, No. 26, verse 90**).

Some commentators tend to define, metaphorically, the appearance of Heaven and Hell in front of the eyes of the good-doers, and the wrong doers, and while there is no evidence available to contrast their evident meaning, still it is better to simply leave them as such. Nevertheless, the facts of the ***Hereafter*** are not precisely clear to us and the circumstances, there, are completely different with those here, so, it is of little concern whether, on That Day, Heaven and Hell move from one place to another or not.

A tradition about the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* denotes that when the above verse was revealed he turned pale. That change was hard for his companions to bear, so, some of them went to Hazrat Ali *(p.b.u.h.)* and

1 al-Mīzān Commentary, vol. 20, p. 416.

told him of the event. He came and kissed the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* between his two shoulders and said: "*O, Messenger of Allah! May my parents be thy ransom, what has happened today?*".

The Prophet *(p.b.u.h)* answered: "*Gabriel came and recited this verse* (the current verse) *to me*".

Ali said that he asked the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) how Hell would be brought (face to face), and he replied: "*Seventy thousand angels will drag and bring it by seventy thousand halters. Hell is so unyielding that if it were left free, it would burn all. Then I will stand against Hell* (Jahannam) *and it will tell me that it has no business with me and Allah has forbidden my flesh for it*". *On That Day, all will be busy with their own affairs, but Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) will say: "O, Lord! My community! My community!*". [1]

Verily, when a sinner observes this, he may be shaken and awakened. A kind of grief and sorrow may envelop him and he will become regretful for his past wrongful deeds, but this regretfulness profits him naught.

Man will desire to come back to this world and recompense his dark past, but there will be no gate open to return. He wants to repent for his faults, but it is too late. He wishes to do good deeds to repay his evil deeds, but, the Records of Deeds will be rolled up.

Hence, it is for this that he cries and,

"*He will say: O, would that I had forwarded*
(good deeds) for (this) my life!".

It is noteworthy that he does not say: '*for my future life*', but he says: '*for (this) my life*', as if the term '*life*' is not used for anything but the life in That World; and the fleeting life of This World, which is full of pain and suffering, is not counted as life.

Sura 'Ankabūt No. 29, verse 64, says: "*And the life of this world is nothing but play and amusement but verily the Home in the Hereafter - that is life indeed, if they but know*".

Truly, those who devoured the wealth of orphans, did not feed the needy, took the lawful and unlawful inheritance from others, and loved the property of this world with all their hearts, will wish, on That Day,

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 489. (A similar meaning is mentioned in Durr-al-Manthūr; al-Mīzān, vol. 20, p. 415.)

that they would have forwarded some good deeds for their next life, which is eternal and is, indeed, the real life. However, this wish is useless and will not benefit them.

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Then, in two short sentences, it describes the violence of the divine punishment on That Day:

"For none can punish like His punishment on That Day."

And why not? Those oppressors, who committed the worst vices in this world, will be punished, on That Day, so that the like of which, had not been seen before. Just as the righteous will be rewarded, to such an extent that no one could have imagined it before; since *Allah* is the Most Merciful to those who show mercy, and vice versa.

"Nor can anyone bind like His binding,"

Neither His '***binding***' nor His '***chastisement***' can be compared with anything else. Why should He bind and chastise? Because they oppressed the helpless servants of *Allah*, in this world, as much as they could and persecuted them with the worst of tortures, they, themselves, should be tightly bound and chastised.

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Sura Fajr
(Break of Dawn)

No. 89 (verses 27-30)

٢٧ يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ○
٢٨ اِرْجِعِيْٓ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ○
٢٩ فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبٰدِيْ ○
٣٠ وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ ○

27. "(It will be said to some) O, you serene soul!"

28. "Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him),"

29. "So enter among My servants,"

30. "And enter into My Garden."

Commentary:

O, You Possessor of the Serene Soul!

In contrast to the previous verses about the terrible chastisement of the transgressors and the lovers of this world in the ***Hereafter***, the following verses are about the calmness of the righteous on Doomsday. The Qur'an addresses them very kindly and says:

"(It will be said to some) O, you serene soul!"

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"Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him),"

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"So enter among My servants,"

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"And enter into My Garden."

How interesting and delightful these words are; full of grace, peace, tranquility and confidence!

It is a direct invitation from *Allah* to the souls who are at peace with confidence, because of their Faith.

Allah invites them to return to Him, to their Possessor, and Cherisher. It is an invitation combined with mutual satisfaction; the satisfaction of the lover with the beloved and the satisfaction of the beloved lover, the one being worshipped.

Consequently, he is being honoured with the crown of servitude and being placed in a position of high rank by Him.

Then, he is invited to enter the Garden with the words, ***'And enter into My Garden*** ' which denotes that the host is only *Allah* , Himself.

What an invitation! What a host! What serenity!

The term /nafs/ ' ***soul*** ' , here, means the spirit of Man, and the term / mutmainnah/ ' ***serene*** ' denotes to the peace and rest that is attained by Faith, as the Qur'an says: " ... ***now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts confident***" , (**Sura Ra'd, No. 13, verse 28**).

Such a soul is both confident in *Allah's* promises and is sure of the way he has chosen. He is aware of both excesses and afflictions and also about the disasters and terrible events of this world, but, has faith in *Allah's* Mercy. The most important point, here, is the soul's confidence, in that, even in the great horror of the ***Hereafter*** he is at peace and rest.

Some commentators believe that the objective point of ' ***Come back to your Lord*** ' is ' ***returning to His virtue and Mercy*** ' , but, it is better to say ' ***return to Him, Himself*** ' , i.e., to be placed close to Him, which is a spiritual return not a corporal or spatial one.

Does this invitation to return to the Lord occur only in the ***Hereafter***, or at the time of departure of the soul from the body?

The context of the verses, of course, refers to the ***Hereafter***, but the meaning of the verse, by itself, is broad and general.

The term / rāḍiyah/ ' ***well-pleased*** ' is used, because the soul will see that all of the promises for the divine rewards are perfectly true and also so great that they are beyond his imagination. The soul will receive *Allah's* Mercy and Grace, so much so that he will become utterly delighted. And the word / marḍiyyah / ' ***well-pleasing*** ' is used to mean that ' ***his deeds*** ' have been contentedly accepted by *Allah*.

Such a servant, with these characteristics who has attained the rank of perfect submission and has reached true servitude which is donating all for *Allah's* sake, and has joined ' ***the high ranks*** ', will certainly have no abode, but Heaven.

Some commentaries denote that these verses were revealed about 'Ḥamzah, Saiyed-ash-Shuhada', but regarding the Sura, which is Meccan, this attitude is, indeed, a kind of verification, not used for the occasion of revelation, as it was also mentioned about Imam Hosain, at the beginning of the Sura.

It is interesting to note that a narration from Imam Sādiq ***(p.b.u.h.)*** which is cited in ' al-Kāfī ' says that one of his companions asked whether a believer may become discontented when his soul is being taken. He (***p.b.u.h.***) replied: " ***By Allah, No! When the angel of death comes to take his soul the believer shows restlessness and the angel says: 'O, Lover of Allah! Be not upset! By He Who has appointed Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) to prophethood, I am more sympathetic to you than a kind father. Look carefully!*** ". He looks carefully and sees Prophet Mohammad, Amir -al- Mo'mineen Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, Hosain and other Imams from their descendents (***p.b.u.th.***). The angel tells him to look and see that they (***p.b.u.th.***) are all his friends.

He opens his eyes and watches. A caller from *Almighty Allah* suddenly beckons and says: " ***O, you serene soul! Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants. And enter into My Garden*** " . At that moment there is nothing better and more beloved than that his soul separates from his body as soon as possible and moves unto his Lord. [1]

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1 al-Kāfī, vol. 3, Chapter: Believers and the Departure of the Soul, Tradition 2.

Supplication:

O Lord! Uplift us to such a peace and rest that we can deserve this beautiful invitation.

O Lord! To attain this rank is not possible save by Your Grace. Please bestow on us Your Grace and Mercy.

O Lord! Certainly Your Graciousness will not decrease if You count us among the possessors of the ' Serene Soul '. We seek it from You. Please cast a favor over us and forgive us.

O Lord! We know that this rank is not prepared except by our remembrance of You. Leave us with the success of this remembrance.

The End

Sura Fajr
(Break of Dawn)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Balad
(The City)

No. 90 (20 Verses)

Contents of this Sura:

The Sura, in spite of its brevity, contains some thought provoking ideas:

In the first part of the Sura, after mentioning some meaningful oaths, this fact is pointed out that Man's life, in this world, is always full of toil and struggle which prepares him to be able to face troubles and difficulties and, therefore, he should not expect absolute tranquility and comfort in the present world; that which is possible only in the next life.

In the next part of this Sura, a few of the greatest divine bounties created for Man are enumerated and, then, discussion is given showing his ingratitude.

In the last part of the Sura, people are divided into two groups: The people of the Right Hand and the people of the Left Hand. Then, some characteristics of the good deeds of the first group and their final fate are stated and are compared to the destiny of the opposite group; the Unbelievers and sinners.

The senses derived from the verses of this Sura are decisive and vigorous, the statements are short and catagorical and the words are extremely effective and explicit. The form and content of the verses show that the Sura is one of the Meccan ones.

The Virtue in Studying Sura Balad:

Regarding the virtue in studying the Sura, the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* is narrated to have said: *"He who studies it, Allah will make him*

safe from His wrath on the Day of Judgement." [1]

A tradition from Imam Sādiq *(p.b.u.h.)* says: *"He who recites Sura Balad in his obligatory prayers will be known as a good-doer in this world, and in the Next World he will be considered among those who have rank and privilege with Allah, and he will be of the friends and companions of the prophets, martyrs, and the pious men."* [2]

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 490.

2 Thawāb-al-A'māl, narrated from Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 578.

Sura Balad
(The City)
No. 90 (verses 1-7)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ لَآ اُقْسِمُ بِهٰذَاالْبَلَدِ ○

٢ وَاَنْتَ حِلٌّ بِهٰذَاالْبَلَدِ ○

٣ وَوٰالِدٍ وَّمَا وَلَدَ ○

٤ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ فِى كَبَدٍ ○

٥ اَيَحْسَبُ اَنْ لَّنْ يَّقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ اَحَدٌ ○

٦ يَقُولُ اَهْلَكْتُ مَالاً لُّبَداً ○

٧ اَيَحْسَبُ اَنْ لَّمْ يَرَهُ اَحَدٌ ○

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Nay! I swear by this city (Mecca),"

2. "And you are an inhabitant of this city,"

3. "And by the begetter and whom he begot,"

4. "Certainly We have created man to be in distress."

5. "Does he think that no one has power over him?"

6. "He says: I have squandered wealth abundant!"

7. "Does he think that no one sees him?"

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Commentary:

By This Sacred City!

It is the style of the Qur'an when stating facts of very great importance, to often begin with oaths. These oaths, themselves, evoke thought and intelligence in Man.

Here, too, in order to state the fact that Man's life, in the present world, is always associated with toil and struggle, it begins with a new oath and says:

"Nay! I swear by this city (Mecca),"

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"And you are an inhabitant of this city".

Mecca is not directly mentioned in these verses, but regarding the Sura, on the one hand, which is Meccan, and the extraordinary importance of this sacred city, on the other hand, it is clear that it is in reference to Mecca. The consensus of commentators concur.

Of course, the holiness and greatness of Mecca requires that *Allah* makes oath to it. The first center of monotheism and worship to the Lord has been built here and great prophets have circumambulated it. But the verse: ***"And you are an inhabitant of this city"*** contains a new matter. It says that this city is so highly sacred and holy because of the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)***, and his blessed existence in it, that it deserves to be sworn to.

The fact is that the spiritual value of land is due to the value of those who dwell there. The pagans should not think that the Qur'an has made worthy this land and made oath to it because it is their home or that it is the central place of their idols. Nay, it is not so. The value of this city, besides its special historical background, is for the sake of the blessed existence, in it, of Mohammad ***(p.b.u.h.)***; *Allah's* unique servant.

There is also another commentary which says: '***We do not swear by this sacred city when they treated you disrespectfully and bid that your life, wealth and honour be free and permissible for all.***'

This is a terrible disgrace to the pagans of Quraish who considered themselves the servitors and protectors of the temple of Mecca and respected it so highly that if a murderer of their father were

seen there, he would be left safe. It is said that even those who took the bark of the trees of Mecca with them were safe because of this respect. Ironically, in showing this kind of respect they did not observe these customs and traditions regarding the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)*.

Why did the pagans hurt him and his companions with every kind of torment that they could, so that they even counted the slaying of them lawful?

This commentary is also narrated in a tradition from Imam Sādiq *(p.b.u.h.)*. [1]

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"And by the begetter and whom he begot".

To answer the question of who is the parent and who is the child, different commentaries have been cited:

1. The father is Abraham and the child is Ismail. Referring to the oath in the previous verse made to the city of Mecca, and we do know that Abraham and his son were the founders of Kaaba and Mecca, this commentary seems very appropriate; in particular, that the pagan Arabs maintained an extraordinary importance for Abraham and his son and they were very proud of them. Many of them have claimed that they have descended from Abraham.

2. The begetter is Adam and whom he begot is his children.

3. The meaning is Adam and all of the Prophets who came from his descendents.

4. It is an oath to any father and child because the process of human reproduction and its survival throughout history is one of the most wonderful things in the creation to which *Allah* has sworn.

To gather these four commentaries, together, is not impossible, but the first one seems the most fitting.

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Then, the attention is paid to a thing which is the final purpose of these oaths:

"Certainly We have created man to be in distress."

The term /kabad/, as Tabarsi cites in Majma'-al-Bayān, originally means ' ***intensity*** '.

But, as Rāqib cites in Mufradāt, the word / kabad / means '*a*

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 493.

Commentary:

By This Sacred City!

It is the style of the Qur'an when stating facts of very great importance, to often begin with oaths. These oaths, themselves, evoke thought and intelligence in Man.

Here, too, in order to state the fact that Man's life, in the present world, is always associated with toil and struggle, it begins with a new oath and says:

"Nay! I swear by this city (Mecca),"

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"And you are an inhabitant of this city".

Mecca is not directly mentioned in these verses, but regarding the Sura, on the one hand, which is Meccan, and the extraordinary importance of this sacred city, on the other hand, it is clear that it is in reference to Mecca. The consensus of commentators concur.

Of course, the holiness and greatness of Mecca requires that *Allah* makes oath to it. The first center of monotheism and worship to the Lord has been built here and great prophets have circumambulated it. But the verse: ***"And you are an inhabitant of this city"*** contains a new matter. It says that this city is so highly sacred and holy because of the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)***, and his blessed existence in it, that it deserves to be sworn to.

The fact is that the spiritual value of land is due to the value of those who dwell there. The pagans should not think that the Qur'an has made worthy this land and made oath to it because it is their home or that it is the central place of their idols. Nay, it is not so. The value of this city, besides its special historical background, is for the sake of the blessed existence, in it, of Mohammad ***(p.b.u.h.)***; *Allah's* unique servant.

There is also another commentary which says: '***We do not swear by this sacred city when they treated you disrespectfully and bid that your life, wealth and honour be free and permissible for all.***'

This is a terrible disgrace to the pagans of Quraish who considered themselves the servitors and protectors of the temple of Mecca and respected it so highly that if a murderer of their father were

seen there, he would be left safe. It is said that even those who took the bark of the trees of Mecca with them were safe because of this respect. Ironically, in showing this kind of respect they did not observe these customs and traditions regarding the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)*.

Why did the pagans hurt him and his companions with every kind of torment that they could, so that they even counted the slaying of them lawful?

This commentary is also narrated in a tradition from Imam Sādiq *(p.b.u.h.)*. [1]

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"And by the begetter and whom he begot".

To answer the question of who is the parent and who is the child, different commentaries have been cited:

1. The father is Abraham and the child is Ismail. Referring to the oath in the previous verse made to the city of Mecca, and we do know that Abraham and his son were the founders of Kaaba and Mecca, this commentary seems very appropriate; in particular, that the pagan Arabs maintained an extraordinary importance for Abraham and his son and they were very proud of them. Many of them have claimed that they have descended from Abraham.

2. The begetter is Adam and whom he begot is his children.

3. The meaning is Adam and all of the Prophets who came from his descendents.

4. It is an oath to any father and child because the process of human reproduction and its survival throughout history is one of the most wonderful things in the creation to which *Allah* has sworn.

To gather these four commentaries, together, is not impossible, but the first one seems the most fitting.

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Then, the attention is paid to a thing which is the final purpose of these oaths:

"Certainly We have created man to be in distress."

The term /kabad/, as Tabarsi cites in Majma'-al-Bayān, originally means ' ***intensity*** '.

But, as Rāqib cites in Mufradāt, the word / kabad / means '*a*

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 493.

disease in the liver of a person '. And, so, it is used for any trouble and misery. Whatever the root of this word might be, its present use means trouble and misery.

Yes, from the early moments of life, even as a foetus in the womb, Man passes through different, difficult stages with pain and toil until the time he is born, and even from then on; during his childhood, the period of his adolescense, and the most difficult times, his mature years, he is always faced with many kinds of trouble and misery. This is the nature of the present world. Those who have other expectations, about this world, other than that there is pain and toil, here, are wrong.

The lives of the prophets and saints of *Allah*, who have been the best of all creatures, have been full of diverse difficulties and painful situations. When the world has been like this for them, then, the status of others is clear.

We may see some people or some societies which have no apparent trouble and seem to live in ease. It is either because of our insufficient information about them, and, when we approach them and study their outwardly comfortable lives, we see the depth of their pain and suffering; or their comfortable situation exists for a short time or in an exceptional period, but, however, it does not change the general law of the world.

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"Does he think that no one has power over him?"

The verse denotes that the life of Man, which is mixed with pain and toil, is an evidence that he has no power.

But, Man is proud and commits any sin and crime as if he were quite safe and were out of the limits of *Allah*'s punishment. When he gains power, he neglects all the laws of *Allah* and disobeys Him, totally. Does he really think that he can escape from the grips of divine punishment? What a great error!

It is also probable that the objective point of the verse is directed toward the rich people who thought no one could take their wealth from them.

Also, it has been cited that the objective point is of those who thought that they will never be questioned about their deeds. The scope of the concept, of the verse, is so vast and wide that it may cover all of these commentaries, combined.

Some have said that the above verse is about a man from the tribe of Jamh by the name of Abu-l-Asad. He was so powerful that when he sat on a piece of leather and ten men tried to take the leather out from under him they failed. Sometimes the leather might have been torn to pieces, but he would remain sitting. [1]

In any case, the verse pointing to these arrogant people does not limit the generality of its meaning.

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Then, on the same theme, it continues stating:

"He says: I have squandered wealth abundant!"

The verse is about those of whom when they were told to spend some money on good deeds, they would respond, boastfully, that they had spent much in that way; but they had spent nothing; and if they had given something to anyone it had been for personal intentions and hypocritical aims.

Some have said that the verse refers to the ones who had spent much wealth on enmity against Islam and the holy Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** and for the plots against Islam, and for this they boasted. As an evidence, a tradition says that in the battle of Khandaq when Hazrat Ali ***(p.b.u.h)*** invited 'Amr-ibn-i-'Abdud to Islam he protested thus: ***"What about that which I have spent, abundantly from my wealth, against you?"***. [2]

Some have also said that the verse points to some of the chiefs of Quraish such as one of the worst enemies of the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), Hārith-ibn-'Amīr, who had committed a sin and asked the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** what he should do about it and Hazrat ordered him to pay atonement, then he replied: ***"From the day I became a Muslim I have squandered wealth abundant."*** . [3]

It is of no consequence whether all of these three commentaries are combined, though the first one is more fitting with the next verse .

The term /ahlakta/ ' ***I have squandered*** ' denotes that he has, indeed, wasted his wealth, but has not gained anything beneficial.

The term /lubad/ means ' ***a dense crowd or thing*** ' and, here, it means ' ***much wealth*** '.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 493.

2 Nūr-al-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 580, Tradition 10.

3 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 493.

"Does he think that no one sees him?"

He does not pay attention to the fact that *Allah* not only sees the deeds he has done in private and in public, but also He knows all that goes through his mind and what he keeps hidden in the depth of his heart or what he intends to do in the future. Is it possible for the infinite Creator Who knows everything not to be able to see or know about a single thing? These neglectful people think that they are out of the scope of His constant watch, but it is because of their own ignorance.

Yes, *Allah* knows where they have obtained their wealth and how and for what purpose they have used it.

A tradition is narrated by Ibn-Abbas that the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** said: ***"(On Dooms Day,) no servant can walk forth unless he is asked about four things: 1) about his lifetime and how he spent it, 2) about his wealth and where he gathered it from and what he spent it for, 3) about his deeds and what he has done, and, 4) about his love for us; the Ahlul-Bait".*** [1]

In short, how can Man be proud of his wealth and boast that he is powerful while all his life is spent in pain and toil, and if he has some wealth it can disappear in one day and if he has strength it can be removed by a fever?

Furthermore, how can a person claim that he has spent much wealth for the sake of *Allah* when He knows his intentions? *Allah* knows both the source of that unlawful wealth, and how he spent it hypocritically and grudgingly.

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1 Majma -al-Bayān vol. 10, p. 494 (Also, Rūh-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 435.)

Sura Balad
(The City)
No. 90 (verses 8-10)

٨ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ○
٩ وَلِسَاناً وَ شَفَتَيْنِ ○
١٠ وَ هَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ○

8. "Have We not made for him two eyes?"

9. "And a tongue and two lips?"

10. "And showed him the two ways (of good and evil)?"

Commentary:

The Gifts of Eyes, Tongue and Guidance!

In the former verses the discussion was about the pride and negligence of neglectful Man, but in the following verses, a part of the greatest material and spiritual gifts of *Allah* to Man is described, in order to break his pride and negligence, on the one hand, and to make him think about the Creator of these gifts, on the other hand; and, for stirring the sense of gratitude inside his soul, which sends him forth to the knowledge of *Allah*.

"Have We not made for him two eyes?"

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"And a tongue and two lips?"

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"And showed him the two ways (of good and evil)?"

Thus, in these short sentences, three great material gifts and a great spiritual gift, all which are from the most important divine gifts, are pointed out. The gifts of eyes, tongue and lips are on one side, and the gift of knowledge and guidance is on the other side.

(It should be noted that the term /najd/ originally means ' ***an open highway*** ' and here /najdayn/, in contrast with /tihamah/ ' ***low land*** ', is to be understood as ' ***the two highways of good and evil*** ').

For the importance of the above gifts it is enough to know that the eyes are the most important means by which to communicate with the outside world. The wonder of the eyes is such that makes Man humiliate himself in front of the Creator of them.

Each of the seven parts of the eye; the sclerotic cornea, choroid, iris, dermoid, aqueous humor, vitreous humor, and retina has a wonderful, special and delicate structure in which the laws of light and mirrors, physically and chemically, are so precisely coordinated that the most modern cameras are worthless in comparsion to them. In fact, if there were nothing in the world except Man, and of all parts of his body only his eye was studied, its wonders would be enough to recognize the greatness of the knowledge and power of *Allah*.

Next, the tongue is referred to, which is the most important means of speech, and speech, itself, is the most important means of communication for human beings. It is with language that humans are able to convey the experience and information of one nation to another, or from one generation to another one. If it were not so, Man could never develop so well in knowledge, science, and civilization both in material and spiritual affairs.

Then, the lips are mentioned. They have an effective function in speech because many sounds and phonemes, in language, are produced by the lips. Besides, the lips are useful in eating foods, preserving the moisture of the mouth, and drinking water. If they were not so, the function of eating and drinking would be difficult for Man, and even his face, with water flowing out of his mouth and the absence of some phonemes in his speech, would be in a disgraceful state.

We know that the first steps in learning many facts are doubled with the help of eyesight and language.

Therefore, the gifts of reasoning and guidance, which are natural and intellectual, are pointed out. The verse can even cover ' ***religious guidance*** ' which is introduced by prophets and Saints.

In fact, *Allah* has given us eyesight and the light; i.e. guidance, to use them which enables us to discover what is right and what is wrong and to know them and, then, we choose between them, ourselves. Thus,

if we go the wrong way and stray we deserve the fruits of our decision.

The sentence: "***And showed him the two ways (of good and evil)***", besides stating Man's free will, regarding ' ***his way*** ' denotes that going the right way is not free from difficulties and toil, as even climbing the high lands has some difficulties, doing wrong has some troubles, too. So, Man should try to choose the right way.

It is Man, himself, who chooses the way for which he can use his eyes and tongue in a lawful direction or an unlawful one and, then, follows the good way or the evil one.

That is why the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), in a tradition, has said: "***Allah told mankind: O children of Adam! If your tongue wants to make you commit in, I have supplied you with two lips to control it, and if your eyes are going to attract you to something unlawful, two eyelids are with you; close them!...*** [1]

Thus, *Allah* has given Man the means of controlling these gifts which is one of the great blessings that He has bestowed on him.

It is noteworthy that in the above verses, when speaking of the tongue, the lips are mentioned but, in talking about the eyes, eyelids are not referred to. Apparently, it is for two reasons: The first is that the function of the lips in eating, drinking and speaking is more important than the function of the eyelids with the eyes; and the second is that the ability to control the tongue is more effective than that of the eyes.

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1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 581.

Sura Balad
(The City)
No. 90 (verses 11-20)

١١ فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ○
١٢ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ○
١٣ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ○
١٤ اَوْ اِطْعٰمٌ فِى يَوْمٍ ذِى مَسْغَبَةٍ ○
١٥ يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ○
١٦ اَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ○
١٧ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَ
تَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ○
١٨ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ○
١٩ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِاٰيٰتِنَا هُمْ اَصْحٰبُ الْمَشْاَمَةِ ○
٢٠ عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُؤْصَدَةٌ ○

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Sura Balad
(The City)
No. 90 (verses 11-20)

11. "But he would not attempt the uphill road,"

12. "And what will make you comprehend what the uphill road is? "

13. "(It is) freeing of a slave (or a captive)"

14. "Or the feeding on a day of hunger,"

15. "Of an orphan near of kin,"

16. "Or to the indigent (down) in the dust."

17. "Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin on each other to patience, and enjoin on each other mercy."

18. "These are the people of the Right Hand."

19. "And those who disbelieve in Our signs, they are the people of the Left Hand."

20. "On them shall be a fire closed over."

Commentary:

An Arduous Uphill Climb!

After mentioning some great gifts, in the previous verses, which are given to Man, the ungrateful persons who, having all the means of felicity, have not taken its path, are blamed in the following verses.

"But he would not attempt the uphill road,"

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The term /'aqabah/ ' *the uphill road* ' is commented on in the next verses.

"And what will make you comprehend what the uphill road is ?"

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"(It is) freeing of a slave (or a captive)"

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"Or the feeding on a day of hunger,"

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"Of an orphan near of kin,"

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"Or to the indigent (down) in the dust."

Therefore, this arduous uphill road, for which the ungrateful persons have never prepared themselves to pass, is a collection of good deeds and pivots on helping people, especially the poor, and is also a collection of the pure, righteous believers which are mentioned in the following verses.

Truly, regarding the intensive love of most people for wealth, climbing this arduous uphill road is really difficult.

Being a true Muslim and having true Faith are not obtained simply by raw claims and merely stating such.

There are some difficult uphill roads in front of every Muslim believer which he must pass, one after another, and by the help of *Allah* and under the light of Faith and Sincerity he can succeed.

Some have rendered the term /'aqabah/, here, in the sense of '***low desire***' and standing against these is called '***the Inner Warfare***' as a tradition by the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* denotes.

Of course, regarding the interpretation of the verses, themselves, about /'aqabah/ '***uphill road***', the meaning of this commentary must be such that the main uphill road is considered '***low desire***', and freeing the captives and feeding the indigent are considered as its clear examples.

Some other commentators have said that the meaning of /'aqabah/ is '***an arduous uphill road in the Hereafter***'; as a tradition from the Prophet *(p.b.u.h)* says: ***"There is an arduous uphill road in front of you, those whose load is heavy cannot pass it. I try to lighten your load to enable you to pass that uphill road."*** [1]

This tradition from the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* has not been cited for the commentary of the current verse, but the commentators have applied it to this verse. However, regarding to the commentary clearly expressed in the verses, their application does not seem appropriate. The objective idea is that the uphill roads of the ***Hereafter*** are illustrations of the hard arduous climbs, here, in this world and whose

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 495.

paths are subdivisions of the paths of this world.

It is worth noting that the term / iqtahama / based on / iqtihām / which originally means ' ***to undertake a task which is frightful*** ', (Rāqib: Mufradāt), or ' ***to enter and pass somewhere with toil and difficulty*** ', (Kashshāf Commentary) ; denotes that passing this uphill road is not an easy thing to accomplish. This is an emphasis on what was mentioned at the beginning of the Sura: ***"Certainly We have created man to be in distress"***. That is, both his life and his obedience to *Allah* are full of difficulties.

It has been narrated that Hazrat Ali ***(p.b.u.h.)*** has said: ***"Paradise is surrounded by unpleasantness while Hell is surrounded by desires"*** [1]

Some points that should be noted, here, are:

1. The phrase /fakka raqabah/ seems to mean ' ***the act of freeing captives*** '.

2. The term /masqabah/ ' ***famine*** ' is based on /saqab/ ' ***to suffer from hunger*** '. So, the words / yaumin θī masqabah/ mean ' ***on a day of hunger*** ' which emphasize on feeding the needy in the time of famine, drought and the like.

3. The term /maqrabah/ means ' ***relationship*** ' and it is an emphasis on the orphans of relatives who are close to the person, or else, we should feed all orphans whoever they are, but this shows that we are more responsible for the orphans who are of our kith and kin.

4. The term /matrabah/ is derived from /tarab/ but, originally is from /turāb/ which means ' ***soil*** ' and is used for ' ***a poor person intimately acquainted with his mother Earth*** ' . This is, again, an emphasis on those types of indigent ones who are more deserving of help, but, of course, all indigent ones should be helped.

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In the next verse, to continue commenting on the ' ***uphill road*** ', it says: ***"Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin (on each other to) patience, and enjoin (on each other) mercy."***

Thus, such believers can pass this arduous uphill road who have both faith and the humane characteristic of self-restraint and enjoining patience along with doing good deeds such as freeing captives and feeding orphans and the indigents.

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1 Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Sermon 176 (Arabic Version).

In other words, these persons are those who have shown strong sincerity in three dimensions of Belief, morals, and action and can be successful in climbing that uphill road.

The term /θumma/ ' ***then*** ' does not always mean ' ***next in time or order*** ' to indicate that they should feed and help the needy first and then they will believe. But, in these cases, as some commentators have mentioned, it is for priority of rank because, the position of Faith and enjoining patience and compassionate kindness is definitely higher than the value of helping the indigent, or, it is better to say that good deeds originate from Faith and high morals.

Some others have also said that the term /θumma/, here, may mean ' ***next in time*** ', since good deeds are sometimes the cause of Faith and they are especially effective in fixing the basis of high morals, because Man's behavior manifests itself, first, into ' ***practice*** ' then, into '***mood*** ' and, then, into ' ***habit*** ', and finally, into the form of ' ***a firm characteristic*** ', and settles in his spirit or nature as a result of that constant practice.

The term / tawāṣau/ with the sense of ' ***enjoin each other to (charity and good deeds)*** ' contains an important point. It shows that patience and perseverance on the path of obedience to *Allah*, and the challenge against one's own desires, and also strengthening the principle of compassionate kindness should not occur in the society only in the form of individual behaviour, but it should appear as a common current in the whole society, and all the members of a society should enjoin observing and preserving this principle on each other in order to make their social relationship, in this way, closer and stronger.

Some have said that the term /ṣabr/ ' ***patience*** ' here, means ' ***to be patient in obeying Allah's command and being studious in practising His instructions*** '. And the term /marḥamat/ ' ***compassionate kindness*** ' points to ' ***love shown to the creatures of Allah*** ' and we know that the relation between the Creator and His creatures establishes the foundation of religion. In any event, patience and perseverance are the main causes of any obedience and servitude and also of avoiding sin and rebellion.

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After describing these characteristics, the position of the possessors of them are introduced:

"These are the people of the Right Hand."

They are those whose record will be given to their right hand, indicating that their deeds are accepted by *Allah*.

It is also probable that the term /maymanah/ is derived from another root with the sense of ' ***grace*** '. If so, it means that they are merciful and helpful both to themselves and to others in the society.

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Then, the contradictory group is pointed out; i.e., those who were not successful in passing the arduous uphill road. It says:

"And those who disbelieve in Our signs, they are the people of the Left Hand."

This position shows that they do not possess good deeds and their records contain nothing but sin and corruption.

The term / maš'amah /, based on the root / šūm /, contrasts with the term /maymanah/. It means that these disbelievers are some ominous people who cause disaster both for themselves and for others in the society. But, since being fortunate or unfortunate, in the ***Hereafter***, is known about people by having their ' ***record*** ' in their right hand or left hand, some commentators have accepted this idea for it, in particular, that the term / šūm / in Arabic philology refers to ' ***a tendency to the left*** '. [1]

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In the last verse of this Sura, there is a short, meaningful hint to the punishment of the latter group. It says:

"On them shall be a fire closed over."

The term /mu'ṣadah/ is based on /iṣād/ which means ' ***to close the door, and secure it***' . It is obvious that when a person is shut in a room with hot, stuffy air, he wishes to open the doors and let the fresh air come in; making the room comfortable to live in. With this thought in mind, we may, now, consider the status of the fervent ***Hell*** with all the doors closed. What a suffocating condition it will have!

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1 Tafsīr, Abulfutūh Rāzī, vol. 12, p. 97.

Supplication:

O Lord! Save us from such a painful punishment!

O Lord! To pass the uphill roads we have in front of us is not possible save with Your help. Please bestow Your help on us.

O Lord! Please count us among the people of the Right Hand and make us successful to be with the good-doers and the Righteous in the Hereafter.

The End

Sura Balad
(The City)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Shams (The Sun)

No. 91 (15 Verses)

The Contents of the Sura:

This Sura, which is, in fact, a Sura on the purification of the '*carnal soul*' ' *sanctification of the heart from vice and impurities* ', explains the same themes as in previous Suras, but at the beginning of the Sura eleven great subjects from the world of creation and Divine essence are mentioned and to prove that salvation depends upon ' ***purification of the carnal soul*** ' some oaths are made. These oaths envelop most of the Qur'anic oaths, collectively.

At the end of the Sura, the Thamood, as an example of a disobedient people, are briefly pointed out. They defied *Allah's* sacred Law and His prophet, Sālih, and were destroyed for their crime; which was the fruit of neglecting ' ***the purification of the carnal soul*** '.

This short Sura, in fact, restates one of the most important instructive points for the destiny of Man's life, and leads him to true Islamic values.

The Virtue in Studying this Sura:

On the virtue of reciting this Sura, we refer to a tradition narrated from the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) who said: " ***He who recites it (Sura Shams) is like he who has given charity (in the way of Allah) to all things that the sun and the moon shine upon.*** " .[1]

And certainly, this great excellence belongs to the one who keeps the sublime content of this short Sura alive in his spirit and knows that the ' ***purification of the carnal soul*** ' is his constant duty.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10. p. 496.

Sura Shams
(The Sun)
No. 91 (verses 1-10)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحٰهَا

٢ وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلٰهَا

٣ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلّٰهَا

٤ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشٰهَا

٥ وَالسَّمَآءِ وَمَا بَنٰهَا

٦ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحٰهَا

٧ وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوّٰهَا

٨ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوٰهَا

٩ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكّٰهَا

١٠ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسّٰهَا

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Sura Shams
(The Sun)
No. 91 (verses 1-10)

In The Name of Allah, The Benefic ent, The Merciful

1. "By the Sun and its Brightness,"
2. "By the Moon when it follows it (reflects the Sun's light),"
3. "By the day when it unfolds its glory,"
4. "By the night when it enshrouds it,"
5. "By the heaven and He Who made it,"
6. "By the Earth and He Who spread it,"
7. "And by the soul and He Who perfected it,"
8. "Then inspired it to understand what is wrong and (what is) right for it,"
9. "Indeed he succeeds who purifiest it,"
10. "And indeed he fails who corrupts it."

Commentary:

Salvation Is Due To 'The Purification of the Carnal Soul'.

There are some considerable oaths pointed out at the beginning of this Sura. By one consideration, they are eleven oaths, and by another one, they are seven. In any case, in this position the number of oaths is the largest throughout the Qur'an and this shows that in these verses the solemn appeal is made to something very splendid. The matter is as important as the solemnity of the heavens, Earth, sun, and moon; that which is effective in the fate of Man.

First, the oaths will be described and commented on and, then, attention will be paid to the great subject that these oaths are made to.

"By the Sun and its brightness",

As it was mentioned earlier, Qur'anic oaths are generally for two purposes. First, the oaths pertain to the importance of the subject which the oath is made to. Second, they pertain to the importance of the affairs, themselves, since oaths are always made to great matters. In this way, the oaths make Man contemplate and evoke his thoughts to

work on the great objects of *Allah's* sublime creation through which he may find a path to Him.

The sun plays a most important role in Man's life and in the life of all living creatures on the earth, because it is not only a source of heat and energy; the essential factors necessary for life, but also it is the origin of some other life giving factors such as; winds, rains, plants, running rivers and waterfalls, and even the energy mineral sources; oil, coal, and the like, all depend on the sunlight so that if this world-illuminating-lamp ceased one day, darkness, silence and death would dominate everywhere.

The term / ḍuhā / originally means ' ***those hours of the morning which follow shortly after sunrise*** ', and, here, it means ' ***the full brightness of the sun*** '.

The particular emphasis put on the term / ḍuhā / is for its importance, when the glory of sunlight dominates the land.

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"By the Moon when it follows it (reflects the sun's light)",

This sense, as some commentators have said, refers to the full moon, i.e. on the fourteenth night of the lunar month; since on this night the moon appears on the eastern horizon nearly at the time of sunset and, with its silver light, introduces itself in the sky and to the world when the world is in its most beautiful state to which swearing is done.

It is also probable that the above mentioned meaning refers to the constant dependence of the moon on the sun and getting light from it, but in this case the sentence: "***...when it follows it***" will be an adverbial time clause.

There are also other commentaries cited about this verse, however, this discussion will conclude here.

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"By the day when it unfolds its glory",

The term / jallā hā / is based on / tajliyah / which means '***revealment*** '.

The commentators are divided on the meaning of the pronoun /hā/ in the term /jallā hā/. Many of them believe it refers to the earth (as was mentioned earlier).

Some also believe that the pronoun refers to the sun, that is: *'by the day when it makes the sun manifest'*. It is true that the sun makes the day appear, but, figuratively speaking, it can be said that the day makes the sun apparent. However, the first commentary seems more appropriate.

At any rate, the swearing is done in the names of these great celestial phenomena, because they are extremely effective both in the life of Man and of all living creatures, and day, itself, is the sign of movement and struggle; a mystery to any intelligent, active mind.

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"By the night when it enshrouds it,"

Night, with all its blessings and effects, which, on the one hand, moderates the heat of the sun and, on the other, brings quietude to living things, is completely necessary for life. It provides Man, and the majority of living creatures, with rest. If the darkness of night did not exist and the sun were to shine, continuously, there would be no tranquility, because the piercing heat of the sun would destroy everything.

Even if the regularity of day and night were not as it is, now, the same situation would exist. For instance, like the moon whose one night is equal to two weeks time on our globe, as well as in the middle of one of its days, the heat of its atmosphere; almost three hundred degrees centigrade, or at midnight when the weather is so cold no living creature, that we know of, could live there.

It is noteworthy that the verbs, in the former verses, were in the past tense while, in this verse, the verb is in the present tense. This variety of tenses may be for the fact that some phenomena, such as day and night, are not peculiar to a definite time; they belong to both the past and the future to show the generality of these incidents over a length of time.

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In the sixth and seventh oaths heaven and its Creator is referred to. It says:

"By the heaven and He Who made it,"

The creation of the glorious heaven with its beautiful heavenly bodies and their wonderful regularities, is one of the manifestations of

Allah's might and wisdom which none else, besides Him, could ever produce.

It is worthy to note that /mā/, in Arabic, usually refers to nonintellectual beings and using it for *Allah*, All-knowing, is unappropriate. Then, some had to consider it 'mā masdarīyah' (the word after ' mā ' is infinitive), and construed the verse as: '***by the heaven and its structure***'. But, regarding verses 7 and 8, whose commentaries will be dealt with later, we have to consider / mā / as a relative pronoun that refers to *Allah*, the Creator of all heavens. Using / mā /, for intelligent persons, referring to the word '***women***' in the following verse, is not uncommon in the Arabic language, either, as in **Sura Nisā, No. 4, verse 3**: "***...Marry women of your choice...***".

A group of commentators believe that the term / mā / with the meaning of '***something***', here, is for mentioning the origin of the world in an ambiguous form and, consequently, later, after careful study, some become familiar with His Knowledge and Wisdom and can change the concept of '***something***' to '***someone***'. But, the commentary on '***He***' is more fitting.

Continuing with the eighth and ninth oaths the reference is to the Earth and the Producer of the Earth. It says:

"***By the Earth and He Who spread it,***"

The Earth, which is a cradle of life for Man and all living creatures, with all its wonders; mountains, seas, valleys, forests, springs, rivers, mines, and other precious sources, is a collection of the Divine Signs, each of which, if studied intelligently, is an evidence of His might and wisdom, and more important than the Earth is the Creator of the Earth Who spreads it out.

The term / taḥā hā / is derived from / taḥw / used with the sense of '***to spread, spread out***' and also with the meaning of '***to repel or to destroy***' and, here, it means '***spread or expand***', because: 1) the earth was totally submerged under water at the beginning and, then, gradually the water subsided into the low lands causing high points of land to appear and spread which is called /dahw-ul-arḍ /, 2) at first the earth was totally in the form of high and low lands with steep slopes that were uninhabitable.

Continuous heavy rains washed the high lands and, thereby, filled

the valleys, so, little by little, dry level lands appeared, becoming suitable for Man to live and farm on.

Some commentators believe that there is also a slight hint, in this sense, to the movement of the Earth, because one of the meanings of /tahw/ is '***repel***' and it may point to the 'driving' of the Earth around the sun or around itself or both of them.

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Finally, attention is paid to the tenth and eleventh oaths, the last oaths of this portion, saying:

"***And by the soul and He Who perfected it,***"

Man is an essence of the world of creation; the best on the earth and in the heavens. The human soul is one of the greatest mysteries of the universe. Its importance is so much so that *Allah* swears by it and by its Producer, both.

Commentators have delivered some different probabilities as to whether the term /nafs/, here, means Man's '***soul***' or his '***body and soul***'.

If it means '***soul***' the term / sawwā hā / (based on /taswiyah/) refers to the proportion and order of Man's soul and his spiritual faculties including his external and internal senses such as comprehension, memory, apprehension, imagination, faculty of origination, love, will, and the like, all of which can be studied in psychology.

If it means '***soul and body***', both, it covers all the wonders and regularities found in the body and its different systems and these can be studied in anatomy and physiology.

However, the term /nafs/, in the Qur'an, refers to both of them.

Regarding the use of /nafs/ for both the soul and the body the Qur'an says about the '***soul***': "***It is Allah that takes the souls (of man) at death...***", **(Sura Zumar, No. 39, verse 42)**, and about the body (*a man*) it says: "***He said: 'O my Lord! I have slain a man among them, and I fear lest they slay me'.***". **(Sura Qasas, No. 28, verse 33)**.

But, here, both meanings are involved since the wonders of the Divine Power are seen in both the soul and body; not in only one of them.

It is interesting that the '***soul***' is mentioned, here, in an indefinite form which may refer to the importance of Man's soul; something which is beyond the imagination and also full of ambiguity that introduces him

as an '***unknown being***'; the very title that some scientists have used for Man.

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In the next verse, concerning the creation of Man, one of the most important things is referred to. It says:

"Then inspired it to understand what is wrong and (what is) right for it,"

Yes, when the creation of Man was completed and he came into being, *Allah* taught him how to discriminate between right and wrong. This is the most precious gift of all granted exclusively to Man. Thus, an entity out of clay and *Allah's* spirit, into which He breathes an understanding of what is sin, impiety, and wrong doing and what is piety and right conduct, in the special circumstances in which it may be placed, was formed as Man.

By those faculties and talents, and these various tokens, Man should learn that his success, prosperity, salvation, and position, where he can be in a rank higher than the angels, depends on himself, on his keeping his soul pure as *Allah* has made it, and his failure, his decline; to the lowest degree even lower than the beast, and his perdition depends on himself soiling his soul by choosing evil.

The term / alhama hā / derived from / il hām / originally means '***to ingurgitate, swallow up something greedily***', then, it has been used with the sense of '***to inspire a matter from Allah to the soul of Man***', as if Man's soul ingurgitates the matter with all its entity. Sometimes, it has also been used in the sense of '***revelation***' while some of the commentators believe that the difference between '***inspiration***' and '***revelation***' is that in the former, the one to whom something is inspired does not understand where he has gotten it from, but in the latter, he knows well where he has received the revelation from and how.

The term / fujūr / is based on /fajr/ and, as it was said before, it means '***break open***', and since the light of dawn breaks the gloom of night it is called /fajr/, and, also, since committing sin breaks the curtain of piety and religion, it is called /fujūr/.

Of course, the purpose of using the term / fujūr /, in the verse under discussion, is to denote the means of this breaking and also the means and ways of its occurence.

And the purpose of using the term / taqwā / based on

/wiqāyah / with the meaning of '*protection*', is that Man protects himself from sin, crime, corruption and vice.

It is necessary to note that verse 8 does not mean, as some have considered, that *Allah* put the means of committing / fujūr / and /taqwā/ inside the soul of Man; the very means which cause him to do wrong actions and break the curtains of piety, or the means and ways that push him towards piety and good actions. They have thought of the verse as an evidence for the existence of some contrariety in the entity of Man.

It says that *Allah* inspired him and taught him these two facts. In simpler words, He showed him the difference between right and wrong, as is mentioned in **Sura Balad, No. 90, verse 10**: *"And showed him the two ways (of good and evil),"*.

And expressively, the soul is inspired by *Allah*; its Almighty and All-wise Author, with the conciousness and the faculty of discretion to distinguish between piety and impiety, right conduct and the wrong ways in life, by the means of his '*wisdom*' and '*primordial nature*'.

This is why some commentators believe that this verse, in fact, refers to the proposition of the idea of '*rational goodness and rational badness*' and that *Allah* has gifted Man with the ability to distinguish betwen them.

It is noteworthy that *Allah* has given Man many blessings, but, among all of them the Qur'an emphasizes, here, on the inspiration of understanding '*piety*' and '*impiety*' and the recognition of right and wrong, because this is the most important factor in the destiny of Man.

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Finally, after these numerous important oaths, attention is paid to the result of them and says:

"Indeed he succeeds who purifies it,"

The term / zakkāhā / is based on / tazkiyah / which originally means '*to grow*' ; and / zakāt / basically means '*growth*'. This meaning is used in a narration from Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*), thus: *"...wealth decreases if you keep spending it and knowledge increases the more you make use of it."*. [1]

1 Nahj-ul-Balāqa. Saying 147.

Later, the term was used to mean '*to purify*', perhaps because the purification of wealth from putridity causes it to increase. In the current verse both meanings are suitable.

Yes, '*salvation*' depends upon preserving the soul in its original purity against its getting soiled, polluted and clouded from carnal desires, by submitting it to the will and the pleasure of the Lord. This is the main, right goal in the life of every human individual, male and female, to succeed in salvation by the way of /tazkiyah/, otherwise, he or she will be in perdition.

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Then, our attention is directed to the contrary group of people and says:

"*And indeed he fails who corrupts it.*"

The term /xāba/ is based on /xībah/ which means '*to be in a hopeless state, deprived, damaged*'.

The term /dassāhā/ is based on /dass/ which basically means '*to foist something unwillingly*', as the Holy Qur'an says about the pagan Arabs who hatefully buried the baby girls alive: "*...Or bury it (alive) in the dust...*", **(Sura Nahl, No. 16, verse 59)**. And hidden, harmful actions, in Arabic, are termed /dasīsah/.

It is also said that the term refers to sin and corruption, because wrongdoers and sinners hide themselves.

Further, it has been said that the objective meaning of the term is that sinners conceal themselves amongst the good-doers, or one conceals his soul in vice, or, yet still, one hides vice and corruption inside his soul. In any case, it refers to sin and evil which contrasts with piety.

It is also possible to gather all these ideas in the vast meaning of the verse.

Thus, those who are successful and those who fail in their lives, in this world, are defined here. The characteristic of these two groups is only the following: Piety and the growth in the spirit of virtue and obeying Allah, or impiety and polluting the soul with sin and corruption.

A tradition from Imam Bāqir and Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.th.*), commenting on this verse, says: "*Indeed he succeeds who obeys, and he is*

deprived who disobeys.". [1]

Again, commenting on these two verses, the Messenger of Allah (*p.b.u.h.*) is narrated to have said in a tradition: "***The soul succeeds that Allah purifies, and the soul is deprived that Allah deprives of every goodness.***".

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Explanation:

Discussion on the relation of the Qur'anic oaths and their solemn affirmations follows:

What relation is there between these eleven highly important oaths and the truth for which the adjurations are fulfilled?

It seems that the main purpose is that *Allah* wants to tell Man that everything, either material or spiritual, was made ready for him to enable him to reach his salvation. On the one hand, He made the world illuminated and fruitful with sunshine and moonlight for him to live in, and brought the regularity of day and night into existence on the Earth to make his life calm and useful.

On the other hand, He created him with a soul gifted with all applicable talents and merits necessary for this aim, such as; a wakeful conscience and a sense of understanding piety and impiety for paving the way to felicity. Yet, he does not purify his soul, but, follows the intrigues of Satan.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 498.

Sura Shams
(The Sun)
No. 91 (verses 11-15)

١١ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَىٰهَآ ○
١٢ إِذِ ٱنۢبَعَثَ أَشْقَىٰهَا ○
١٣ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ نَاقَةَ ٱللَّهِ وَسُقْيَٰهَا ○
١٤ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُم بِذَنۢبِهِمْ فَسَوَّىٰهَا ○
١٥ وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَٰهَا ○

11. "The Thamood (people) rejected (their prophet) through their inordinate wrong doing,"
12. "When rose up the most reprobate of them,"
13. "Then the Messenger of Allah (Sālih) said to them: 'It is a she-camel of Allah and (bar her not from) having her drink!"
14. "But they rejected him and hamstrung her, so their Lord crushed them for their sin and levelled them (with the ground),"
15. "And for Him is no fear of its consequences."

Commentary:

The Fatal End of the Wrongdoers!

Following the previous awakening verses about the end of those who pollute their soul, in the next verses one of the clear examples of these people, of the past, is referred to and the destiny of the Thamood is explained with some short, expressive, decisive sentences. It says:

"The Thamood (people) rejected (their prophet) through their inordinate wrong doing,"

The terms / ṭaqwā / and / ṭuqiyān / both have the same meaning, which is '***transgression***'; and, here, it means '***exceeding all the Divine bounds and disobeying His Law***'.

The Thamood people, whose prophet was Sālih (a.s.) are the most

ancient people to have lived in a zone between Hijāz and Shām (Syria). They lived comfortably and care-free on a fertile, level land in strong, splendid castles. They not only showed ingratitude for the abundant blessings they had, but disobeyed their Lord by acting rebellious to the instruction of the Apostle Sālih (a.s.) and mocked His Sign, the she-camel. This conduct brought perdition to the people by means of a sudden, violent blast from heaven which was accompanied by an earthquake.

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Then, the Qur'an illustrates one of the clear examples of this rebellious group and says:

"When rose up the most reprobate of them,"

The term /ašqā/ means '***the most wretched***' among them, referring to the person who hamstrung the she-camel which was sent to them as a trial and whose murder was a sign of rebellion against their divine prophet (a.s.).

Some commentators and historians have said that the most wicked man among them, who dared to commit that heinous crime, was Qudār-ibn-Sālif.

In some traditions it is narrated that the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) of Islam said: ***"The most wicked person among the ancient ones was the murderer of the harmless she-camel of Sālih (a.s.), and the most wicked person of the latter age is the murderer of Ali-ibn-Abi-Taleb. A wicked one, who will make his beard dyed (red) from the blood of his forehead."*** [1]

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In the next verse there is more about the rebellious impieties of the Thamood people. It says:

"Then the Messenger of Allah (Sālih) said to them: 'It is a she-camel of Allah and (bar her not from) having her drink."

The meaning of '***the Messenger of Allah***' , here, is Sālih (a.s.), the prophet of the Thamood people; and '***a she-camel of Allah***' refers to the fact that it was no ordinary she-camel, but it was a miracle from Allah sent to those people to prove that the prophet was a true prophet and from Allah. One of the specialities of the camel, according to a known

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 499; and also in Tafsīr-e-Qartabī, vol. 6, p. 7168.

narration, was that she exited from inside the mountain to be a clear miracle for the arrogant disbelievers.

It is well understood from other verses of the Qur'an that Sālih (a.s.) told the people that they should divide the water of the town between the camel and themselves so that on one day they could drink the water and, in turn, the next day the camel could drink, without them bothering each other: "***And tell them that the water is to be divided between them: Each one's right to drink being brought forward (by suitable turns)***" **(Sura Qamar, No. 54, verse 28)**.

And he particularly told them: "***Touch her not with harm, lest the Penalty of a Great Day seize you,***" **(Sura Shu'ara', No. 26, verse 156)**.

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"***But they rejected and hamstrung her, so their Lord crushed them for their sin and levelled them (with the ground).***"

The term / 'aqarūhā / is based on / 'uqr / which basically means '***origin, basis***' and then '***to cut the basis, or to kill***'.

Some have said that the objective meaning here is '***to hamstring an animal***', that is, to cut the legs of the animal and make it fall so that it, consequently, dies.

It is interesting to note that the man who was deputed to do the impious deed of hamstringing the she-camel was only an individual whom the Qur'an considers '***the most reprobate***' but had, of course, the sympathy and cooperation of the whole people, as the verse, too, mentions the subjective pronoun of the verb in the plural form /'aqarūhā / '***they hamstrung her***' which means that others of the Thamood tribe had a share in committing the act, also.

An action like that is usually plotted by a group and, then, is fulfilled by one or a few definite individuals. Furthermore, they are content to do it and pleased with it, which unequivocally introduces the group as participants.

That is why Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) has said: "***...for only one individual killed the camel of Thamood, but Allah punished all of them, because all of them joined him by their acquiescing in their contentment to it.***' Thus, *Allah*, the glorified has said: "***Then they hamstrung her, and turned***

(themselves) regretful," **(Sura Shuraʾ, No. 26, verse 157).** [1] But, it was too late for that regretfulness.

It was the fruit of their own rejection and impiety that destroyed them and, then, they were buried in their houses by the punishment of *Allah*.

The term /damdama/ is based on the term /damdamat/ which is sometimes used in the sense of '***to destroy***' and sometimes '***to make shared punishment fall upon people***' or '***to cut the roots of them***', or '***to pound, crush***' and sometimes '***to disfavor***' or '***to surround, involve***', all of which can be applicable, in this verse, because that penalty originated from the wrath of *Allah* due to their sin which resulted in their being made level with the ground.

The term /sawwāhā/ is based on /taswiyah/ which means '***to make level or equal***', and it may mean that their houses were levelled with the ground, or *Allah* sent an equal destruction upon them all, so that no one could escape.

All these meanings can also be accepted.

The pronoun / hā / in the term / sawwāhā / refers to the tribe of Thamood or to their cities and buildings which *Allah* destroyed and levelled with the ground.

Some have said that the pronoun refers to the term /damdama/ '***destruction***' which is understood from the next sentence, i.e *Allah* divided this wrath and destruction equally between them all.

However, the first commentary seems more appropriate.

By the way, this verse denotes that their penalty was the fruit of their sin and was in proportion to it and this adopts to Divine Justice and Wisdom.

It is said about many nations that when they felt that they were receiving punishment and saw its preliminary signs they became regretful and repented; but, as some narrations denote, the situation about the Thamood is different. They decided to find Sālih (a.s.), their sincere prophet, and kill him when they saw the first signs of the Divine penalty for their disobedience. This shows the depth of their rebellion and disobedience, against *Allah*, and the Messenger of Allah, Sālih (a.s.), whom He saved by His Mercy and then destroyed all the rejectors.

1 Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Sermon 201 (Arabic Version).

Finally, in the last verse of the Sura, in order to clearly warn all those who go on the same path, it says:

"And for Him is no fear of its consequence".

There are many rulers who have the authority and power to punish others, but, they fear the consequence that it may have and the reactions of the people. For this very reason they do not use their power completely, or, putting it more directly, their power is based on weakness and inability, and their knowledge is mingled with ignorance, hence, they fear of being unable to afford the unknown results that they will face with.

Allah, the Almighty, the All-knowing, has created and can create at will, and there can be no question of any such apprehension, in His case, that is why He does decisively what He pleases.

Transgressors and wrongdoers should be careful of their conditions, lest they will be involved in the wrath of *Allah* for their evil actions.

The term / 'uqbā / means '***end, finite***', and the pronoun /hā/, at the end of the Arabic word, refers to /damdamah/ '***destruction***'.

Explanation:

The brief story of the Thamood:

As it was mentioned before, the Thamood flourished in a territory between Medina and Shām (Syria). The plain was known as 'Wādi-ul-Qurā' which forms the southern boundary of Syria. They worshipped a part of a mountain when Sālih (a.s.) was sent to them as an Apostle of Allah. He preached to those people and tried his best to correct their faith and conduct, but it was to no avail at all. At last the people challenged Sālih (a.s.) saying that they would believe in *Allah* and obey His Apostle, Sālih, if Sālih could cause a she-camel to come out of the mountain with a young one. Sālih (a.s.) did cause the miracle and yet the people did not believe and correct themselves. It was then fixed that on one day the she-camel would drink of the water of the town and on the next day the people would have the water.

As some narrations denote, even on the day the she-camel drank the water, she gave so much milk that the whole town was supplied.

Sālih (a.s.) had already warned them that if they caused the least harm or hurt to her a chastisement from *Allah* would overtake them. But, the cup of their iniquities was full enough to plan to kill Sālih (a.s.) and the she-camel, both, who were obstacles to their carnal desires. They cruelly hamstrung the poor, harmless she-camel by the hand of the most wretched man among them, Qudār-ibn-Sālif. But, they failed to find Sālih (a.s.) to slay. After that he had warned them that they had only three days time in which to enjoy themselves in this world: ***"But they did hamstring her. So he said: 'Enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days. (Behold) there is a promise not to be belied !'"*** **(Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 65).**

Just three days time for further thought and repentance ! However, they were not only heedless, but also increased their impiety. Then, by night came a terrible earthquake as a Divine punishment, and buried them in their own fortress homes which they thought to be such places of security: ***"The (mighty) Blast overtook the wrongdoers, and they lay prostrate in their homes before the morning."*** **(Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 67).**

They were destroyed and the light of life in their land was extinguished so that no one there remained alive, but, *Allah* saved Sālih (a.s.) and his believing followers: ***"When Our Decree issued, We saved Sālih and those who believed with him, by (special) Grace from Ourselves..."*** **(Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 66).**

Supplication:

O Lord! You are our hope in avoiding carnal desires; please help us.

O Lord! You inspired in us the understanding of what is 'piety' and what is 'impiety'. Bestow upon us the success of taking benefit from this inspiration.

O Lord! The temptations and intrigues of Satan are mysteriously concealed in the soul of Man. Open their mysteries to us so that we may know them and be able to avoid them.

The End

Sura Shams (The Sun)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name Of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Lail
(The Night)
No. 92 (21 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

This Sura is a Meccan Sura and has the same qualities that other Meccan Suras have; short verses. Their contents are expressive and awakening and they are generally about the ***Hereafter*** and Divine chastisement.

At the beginning, after making three oaths, the verses divide people into two groups: Those pious believers who give in charity and fear *Allah* ; and those disbelievers who are greedy misers and think themselves self-sufficient. The fate of the first group is introduced as being in ease and happiness, and the destiny of the second group is affliction and misery.

At one point in the Sura, after mentioning the fact that Allah guides His servants, the Qur'an warns all of us of a blazing fire. Then, it introduces the conduct of those who enter the fire and that of those who are kept away from it.

The Virtue in Studying Sura Lail:

On the virtue of this Sura, the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) is narrated to have said: ***"He who recites it (Sura Lail) Allah awards him so much so that he is satisfied, and He protects him from toil, and makes (the path of his life) smooth for him."*** [1]

Sura Lail
(The Night)
No. 92 (verses 1-11)

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم ○

١ وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشٰى ○

٢ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلّٰى ○

٣ وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنْثٰى ○

٤ إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتّٰى ○

٥ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطٰى وَاتَّقٰى ○

٦ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنٰى ○

٧ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرٰى ○

٨ وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنٰى ○

٩ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنٰى ○

١٠ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرٰى ○

١١ وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدّٰى ○

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Sura Lail
(The Night)
No. 92 (verses 1-11)

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "By the night when it enshrouds,"

2. "By the day when it brightens up,"

3. "By Him Who created the male and the female,"

4. "Verily (the ends) you strive for are diverse."

5. "Then as for him who gives (in charity) and fears (Allah),"

6. "And (in all sincerity) testifies to the Best,"

7. "We will ease him to the state of ease."

8. "But he who is a greedy miser thinks himself self-sufficient,"

9. "And gives lie to the Best,"

10. "We will ease him to the path of affliction,"

11. "And his wealth will not avail when he perishes."

The Occasion of the Revelation of Sura Lail:

Commentators have cited an occasion of revelation for the whole Sura on the authority of Ibn-Abbas. Here is what the late Tabarsī has said in Majma'-al-Bayān:

There was a man among the Muslims who had a palm tree, a branch of which was bent towards the house of a poor man who had a large family. Sometimes the owner of the palm tree would collect the fruit and if by chance some dates fell in the poor man's yard and his children picked them up, the owner would come and snatch them away from their hands and even from their mouths.

The poor man complained to the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) who, in turn, requested that the man leave until he (***p.b.u.h.***) could investigate the situation.

Then, it happened that the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) met the owner of the palm tree and asked him if he would give him (the holy Prophet) the tree in question, in return for a palm tree in Paradise. The man declined with the plea that the dates of that tree, among all his numerous trees, were so delicate that he could not give it up.

There was another man, according to some narrations, named Abul-Dahdah, who heard what the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) promised the owner. He said, "***O' Messenger of Allah! Would you promise the same to me if I get the palm tree from the owner and give it to you***?" The holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) said, "***Yes***".

So, the man went to the owner of the palm and talked with him and questioned him as to if he knew that the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) had offered a palm tree in Paradise instead of the one he had and he answered that he had many palm trees, but, the taste of the dates of that tree was the most delicious.

Then, the man asked the owner whether he wanted to sell it, and he refused unless he received a sum that he supposed no one would pay. The man asked about the price and the owner answered that it was forty palm trees.

The buyer was astonished and told him that it was an expensive price that he demanded for a bent palm tree--forty palm trees!

Then, after a short pause the buyer agreed to give him forty palm trees. The greedy seller asked him to call some people as witnesses for the exchange and the buyer did. After that, he went to the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) and presented the palm tree to him.

The Messenger of Allah went to the poor man and told him that the palm tree was in his and his children's possession.

It was there that Sura Lail was descended and stated what it declared about the righteous and the wrongdoers.

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Commentary:

Piety and the Divine Assistance.

At the beginning of this Sura, again, we find three reflective oaths about the '***creation***' and the Creator of the world. It says:

"***By the night when it enshrouds,***"

The use of the term / yaqšā / '***enshrouds***' is because night, like a creature, covers half of the globe and brings it under her authority, or is for the reason that the light of the day or the rays of the world-illuminating sun 'hides' when night comes forth In any case, it is an evidence to the importance of Night's effective role in men's lives, including the adjustment of the sun's heat, the resting of the living creatures in it, and the adoration of the night by awake, vigilant believers.

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Then, our attention is attracted to another oath. It says:

"By the day when it brightens up,"

'***Day***' begins from the moment that the light of dawn breaks the curtain of the gloom of night and removes the darkness and dominates the expanse of heaven, filling everywhere and everything with its glory and light; the very light that is the secret of the life of all living things.

In the Qur'an the contrast of '***light***' and '***darkness***' and their effect in Man's life is repeatedly stated and emphasized on, because they are two perpetual great blessings and are, also, two Divine Signs.

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Then, the last oath of this Sura is mentioned. It says:

"By Him Who created the male and the female,"

The existence of the mystery of the sexes runs through all life in human beings, animals and plants. The process of development that occurs in the life-germ from the very beginning until the time of birth, the characteristics of both sexes due to their functions and actions, and the secrets hidden in the sex phenomena are all Signs of the glorious world of creation through which we may understand the greatness of its Creator.

The term /mā/ '***something, a thing***' used, here, for *Allah* is for the extraordinary greatness of His Entity that has an ambigious state which is beyond the imagination and human concept.

Some have also said that /mā/ , here, in Arabic is 'masdarīyah'. If so, the sentence means: '***By the creation of male and female***'. But, this interpretation seems feeble.

In fact, the first two oaths refer to the celestial Signs while the third oath points to the human signs.

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The conclusion of the aforementioned oaths is stated in the next verse. It says:

"Verily the (ends) you strive for are diverse.

People have different or diverse aims in life for which they strive. One might be talking of the pleasures of this world while another may be mindful of the life in the Hereafter. No one lives aimlessly, but we should be careful of the way in which we use our divine talents and powers in order to understand if it is for good or evil.

The term / šattā / is the plural form of / šatit / and is derived from /šatt/ which means '***separate, divided***'.

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Then, the Qur'an, dividing people into two groups; addressing the first says:

"Then as for him who gives (in charity) and fears (Allah),"

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"And (in all sincerity) testifies to the Best,"

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"We will ease him to the state of ease."

The purpose of using the term /a'tā/ is for the meaning of charity in the way of *Allah* and helping the needy.

Then, immediately after that, it emphasizes on '***piety***' which may refer to the necessity of pure intention in practicing the action lawfully and with permitted wealth, without any reproach or harm or hurt, because all of the meanings are gathered in the sense of '***piety***'.

Some have said that /a'tā/ refers to financial actions done for *Allah*, and /atqā/ refers to other religious actions of worship. But, the first commentary is better, because it adapts both to the appearance of the verse, and to the occasion of revelation that was mentioned before.

The idea of '***testifying to the Best***' indicates '***the faith in the Divine blessed rewards***', as Abul-Dahdah, the believing man, mentioned in the story on the occasion of revelation of the Sura, who with faith in the

Divine blessed rewards, spent his wealth. This meaning is also mentioned in **Sura Nisa, No. 4, verse 95**: "*...unto all (in Faith) hath Allah promised good...*".

Some have said the phrase means '*the best religion*', i.e. '*The faith in Islam*' which is the best religion.

Some have rendered the words thus: "*I testify that there is no god besides Allah, and I testify that Mohammad is the apostle of Allah.*" But, regarding all conditions, the first commentary seems more fitting.

The sentence: "*We will ease him to the state of ease*" may refer to the success, given by *Allah*, and making the path of obedience for such persons easy; or paving the road to paradise for them and the act of receiving and greeting them by angels; or it may include all of them.

No doubt, those who give charity and alms, piously, and believe in the Divine rewards, their difficulties will be changed into easy affairs for them, and will have enjoined a special calmness both in this world and the next.

In the beginning the payment of the alms-tax and giving charity may seem difficult for us, but with continued and frequent practice it will become easy, so that we will gain enjoyment from it.

There are many generous people who are happy to have guests present at their meals but, if they do not receive anyone on a particular day, they will be rather sad. Therefore, for them to receive guests is a kind of ease in their lives.

We should not neglect that, in principle, belief in the Resurrection and in Divine, immense rewards changes Man's tolerance of different hardships and makes them easy for him. This kind of believing man will spend, eagerly, not only his wealth, but, will also give up his dear, sweet life for the love of martyrdom on the path of *Allah*.

The term /yusrā/ is derived from /yusr/ that basically means '*to saddle a horse and make it ready to ride on*', and the term has been used for any easy deed.

In the next verse attention is paid to the contrary group and says:

"*But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient,*"

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"*And gives the lie to the Best,*"

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"We will ease him to the path of affliction."

Here, the term /buxl/ '***miser***' is mentioned opposite to / a'tā / '***being generous***' which we find in the first group; and / istaqnā / '***demands self-sufficiency***' is either an excuse for the conduct of avarice and a means of heaping up wealth, or it refers to an imagination of being self-sufficient of the divine rewards. This characteristic is just opposite to that of the former group who always seek *Allah's* favour. Or, since the latter group think that they do not need to obey their Lord, then they always commit sin.

Among these three commentaries the first one seems more appropriate, though all of them may be combined.

The purpose of the phrase "***gives the lie to the Best***" is for signifying disbelief in the rewards of the Next World or rejecting the religion and the good ways of the prophets.

The sentence: "***We will ease him to the path of affiction***" is a state opposite to the case in the sentence: "***We will ease him to the state of ease***" where *Allah* brings forth his favor and the righteous succeed on a smooth path of obedience and charity which makes them free from the difficulties of life. But, the members of the other group are in absence of success, and travelling the path is difficult for them. They will be involved in hardships in this world and the next.

In general, the fulfillment of good deeds and especially payment of charity and the alms-tax in the way of *Allah* is difficult for the disbelieving , greedy misers , while it is easy , exciting and pleasant for the righteous.

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At the end of this part of the Sura, the blind-hearted, greedy misers are warned:

"And his wealth will not avail him when he perishes."

He can neither take anything of his worldly property with him, nor could it prevent him from the fire of Hell.

The term /mā/ , at the beginning of the verse, may be a negative sign (as it was mentioned above), or for questioning in the negative. If so, the sentence means: ***'What benefit can he take from his wealth when he falls in the grave or Hell?" '***

The term /taraddā/ is based on /ridā 'at/ and /radaya/ which means

'***to perish, to fall*** ' and since falling from a high place usually causes one to perish, it is also used in the sense of ' ***perdition*** '. In the current verse it may mean ' ***to fall into the grave, or Hell, or perdition as a punishment.*** '

Thus, the Qur'an, in these verses, speaks about two groups of people: The first is the righteous who are pious, generous believers; and the second is the group of unbelievers who are impious and miserly. The examples of both groups are clearly pointed out in the description of the occasion of revelation.

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Sura Lail
(The Night)
No. 92 (verses 12-21)

١٢ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ ○

١٣ وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْاخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَىٰ ○

١٤ فَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّىٰ ○

١٥ لَا يَصْلَيْهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى ○

١٦ الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ○

١٧ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى ○

١٨ الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّىٰ ○

١٩ وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِندَهُ مِن نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزَىٰ ○

٢٠ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ○

٢١ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَىٰ ○

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Sura Lail
(The Night)
No. 92 (verses 12-21)

12. "Verily We take upon Ourselves to guide,"

13. "And certainly to Us (belongs the End) the Hereafter and (the Beginning) the first (life)."

14. "Therefore, I warn you of a Fire that blazes:"

15. "None shall reach it but the reprobate,"

16. "Who gives the lie (to Truth) and turns away,"

17. "And from which shall the most devoted to Allah be kept away,"

18. "Who gives away his wealth, purifying himself,"

19. "And bestows no favour on anyone for the sake of reward,"

20. "But only the desire to seek for the countenance of his Lord, the Most High,"

21. "And he shall soon be well-pleased."

Commentary:

Payment of Charity Causes the Fire to be Kept Away.

In the former verses, people were divided into two groups; pious, generous believers and impious, miserly unbelievers, and, then, their different fates were pointed out. Now, in the following verse, we are told that *Allah* guides us to the straight way, so, the choice is up to us without being obliged to it. It is our own duty to decide and act accordingly. Going along the right path is beneficial for us, ourselves; *Allah* has no need of it at all.

"Verily We take upon Ourselves to guide."

This guidance is irrespective of guidance by way of genesis (through natural position and intellect) or guidance by way of religion (through books and traditions). All other necessary means of guidance have already been provided.

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"And certainly to Us (belongs the End) the Hereafter and (the Beginning) the first (life)."

'We are not in need of your Faith and obedience. Neither does your obedience profit Us nor does your sinning hurt Us.' All things and the means of guidance are provided, fully, for the use of Man to take benefit from.

According to this commentary '*guidance*' means '*showing the way*'. It is also probable that the purpose of these two verses is to encourage the generous believers, and to say that they are guided better by *Allah* and their way is easy for them in this world and the Next World, and since all this world and the Next World are in His possession, He is completely capable of this.

It is true that this world comes before the Next World but, because of its importance and because it is the main, final goal, the Hereafter is mentioned first.

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And since one of the branches of guidance is the act of warning, in the next verse it says:

"Therefore, I warn you of a Fire that blazes:"

The term / talaẓẓā / is derived from / laẓā / in the sense of '*a smokeless flame or fire*', and we know that this kind of fire has a hotter heat. The term /laẓā/ has sometimes been used for Hell, itself.

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Then, it points to those who enter this blazing fire, saying:

"None shall reach it but the reprobate,"

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"Who gives the lie (to truth) and turns away,"

So, the scale for happiness and unhappiness is Faith and disbelief, respectively, and the fruit that each of them brings forth. Allah, in His infinite Mercy, has provided full guidance to His creatures. Man, having mental and spiritual faculties and talents, with all the inspired prophets and heavenly Books, and all Divine signs and possibilities of guidance at his disposal, rejects the truth and goes astray. So, such a person is surely the clear example of the reprobate.

In the sentence "***Who gives the lie (to truth) and turns away***" , the idea "***gives the lie***" may refer to '***blasphemy***' and "***turns away***" to '***the negligence of doing good***'; as this is a condition of blasphemy.

Or, both of them may refer to the negligence of Faith, in this way, that, at first, they reject the prophet and, then, turn their backs and go away from him forever.

The commentators have a question and answer thus: The above mentioned verses indicate that the fire of Hell is only for disbelievers, but, this idea does not adapt to what the other verses of the Qur'an and the Islamic narrations say from which it is understood that the sinful believers will have a share from the fire, too. That is why some misled classes, taking these verses as their evidence, believe that with the existence of Faith sinning is possible without punishment.

In answering the question, two points should be made: The first is that the purpose of the phrase '***reaching the fire***', here, is the same as '***being immortal in Fire***' that we know it belongs to disbelievers, with reference to the verses that mean besides blasphemers, there are some who enter Hell.

The second point is that the idea that the above verses and the following ones say that being kept away from the fire is only for the most God-fearing people, i.e. on the whole the situations of the two groups are to be indicated thus: The miserly unbelievers and the generous, pious believers. From these two groups only the first one reaches Hell and the second group enters Heaven. Thus, the third group, that is, the sinful believers, is not in question at this point.

In other words, limitation, here, is '***an additional limitation***'; as if Heaven is created only for the second group. This statement makes other objections clear in connection with the contradiction of the current verses and the next ones which restrict salvation to the righteous.

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Then, the words are about some people who are kept away from this blazing Fire. It says:

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"***And from which shall the most devoted to Allah be kept away.***"

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"He who gives away his wealth, purifying himself."

The usage of the term /yatazakkā/ is, in fact, for the meaning of '***purity of intention***' since the Arabic root word / zakā / implies both increase and purification in morals and wealth, as: "***Of their goods take alms, that so thou mightest purify and sanctify them; and pray on their behalf. Verily prayers are a source of security for them...***". (**Sura Tauba, No. 9, verse 103**).

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Then, to emphasize on their pure intention in their giving of charity, it says:

"And bestow no favour on anyone for the sake of reward,"

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"But only the desire to seek for the countenance of his Lord, the Most High."

In other words, many charities or good deeds are done with a motive; that of returning someone else's favour and compensating and rewarding someone for some service done or expecting some reward in return for ones own good deeds. But the above mentioned verses denote that the sole motive in a pious, believing Man's mind is that he desires the Countenance or, Good Pleasure of the Lord, the Most High.

This countenance or /wajh/ '*face*', here, with the meaning of '*essence*', implies good pleasure or the approval of *Allah*.

The phrase '***his Lord, the Most High***' shows that the act of '***giving charity***' is done with a good understanding of His Lordship and that He is the Most High.

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Finally, in the last verse of the Sura, the unique great reward of these good believers is pointed out in a short sentence. It says:

"And he shall soon be well-pleased".

Yes, one who is whole-heartedly devoted to *Allah* shall find *Allah*'s pleasure as he expects; an absolute pleasure, vast, illuminated and conditionless which contains all the blessings, of His Bliss. It is something that, today, we cannot imagine at all; and what a grand, splendid blessing this reward is!

Some commentators have thought that the pronoun in the term

/yarḍā / may refer to *Allah*. If so, the verse means: '*And Allah shall soon be well-pleased (with him)*' which is, itself, a great, unique gift that the Lord, the Most High, has bestowed upon His servant, and certainly such a pious believing servant will be well-pleased with Him, because these two correlate with each other. **Sura Bayyinah, No. 98, verse 8** verifies this idea. It says: "*...Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him...*", and also the verse: "*Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing*" , (**Sura Fajr, No. 89, verse 28**). But, the first commentary is more appropriate.

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Explanation:

The Moral Excellence of Spending in the Way of Allah:

Spending in the Way of *Allah* and giving financial help to the needy; especially to the respectable ones, with pure and good intention, is one of the themes that is repeatedly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and is one of the characteristics of '***True Faith***'.

There are many Islamic narrations on this subject so much so that the culture of the religion indicates that financial spending, which has no motive but for the countenance of *Allah* and which is free from any hypocrisy, reproach and hurt, is the best of deeds.

Here are some meaningful traditions on the matter:

1. A narration from Imam Bāqir (***p.b.u.h.***) says: "***The best actions with Allah is the bringing of joy to the soul of a believing Muslim, feeding him until he is satisfied, or clearing his debt***".[1]

2. The Messenger of Allah (***p.b.u.h.***) is narrated to have said in a tradition: "***Good temper, feeding (others) and blood shed (offered in sacrifice for the sake of Allah) are (signs) of Faith.***" .[2]

3. Imam Sādiq (***p.b.u.h.***) is narrated to have said: "***I have not seen anything equal to visiting a (Muslim) believer but that of feeding him, and it is for Allah to feed from Heaven the (believing) one who feeds a believer.***" .[3]

4. In another tradition the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) is narrated to have

1 Bihār-al-Anwār, vol. 74, p. 395, Traditions 35 and 38.

2 Ibid.

3 Usūl-i-Kāfī, vol. 2, Section on 'Feeding a Believer', Tradition 17.

answered the man who asked him what the best actions were: "*Feeding (others), and (saying) good words.*" .[1]

Again, a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) says: "*The one who maintains a Muslim family (entertaining them) for a day and a night's time, Allah forgives his sins.*"

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Supplication:

O Lord! Give all of us the success of having a share of this great, good action.

O Lord! Cause the purity of our intention to be increased.

O Lord! We seek your Grace and Mercy so that You will be well-pleased with us and we will be well-pleased, too.

The End
Sura Lail
(The Night)

1 Bihār-al-Anwār, vol. 74, p. 388, Tradition 113.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Duhā
(The Glorious Morning Light)

No. 93 (11 Verses)

The Contents of Sura Ḍuhā:

This Sura, which is one of the Meccan Suras, according to some narrations, was revealed after a brief interval that happened in revelation and the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* was anxiously awaiting its arrival because the enemies had become obnoxious and began to gossip. Then, the verses descended on him, like refreshing rain, and gave him a new strength, which ceased his enemies taunts.

This Sura begins with two oaths and then informs the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* of the good news that *Allah* has never forsaken him nor left him alone.

It adds that, soon, *Allah* will provide for him so abundantly that he will become content.

And, in the last verses of the Sura, He reminds the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) of his past life to illustrate how *Allah* has always bestowed His loving care on him and in the most difficult moments has supported him in the past and, so, his future was sure.

That is why, at the end of the Sura, He bids him, (in appreciation of the very great bounties), to be kind with the orphans and the needy, thus: ***"Therefore treat not the orphans with harshness," "And for the one who asks, repulse not," "And as for the bounties of your Lord, do announce (it)"*** .

The Virtue in Studying this Sura:

For the virtue of this Sura it is enough to say that there is a tradition narrated from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) which says:

"He who recites this Sura will be among those Allah is pleased with; and it is possible that Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) intercedes for him, and he will be

rewarded ten 'good deeds' for each orphan or needy (or petitioner)". [1]

All of these virtues are for the believer who recites the Sura and acts upon it.

It is noteworthy that according to many narrations this Sura and the next one, **Inshirāh**, are together one Sura; and, since in prayers we should recite a complete Sura after **Sura 'al-Hamd'**, then, in reciting this Sura the next one should be added, too. (A similar idea has been given for **Sura al-Fil and Sura Quraish**.)

And if we think carefully of the contents of these two Suras, we can see the close relation of their subjects and find that they are certainly together, even though the invocation: '*In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful*' separates them into two Suras.

We should refer to the books of religious jurisprudence to answer questions such as: 'Are these two Suras the same in every repect' or, 'should we consider them as one Sura in prayers?'. In any case, the consensus of scholars agrees that, in prayers, we cannot recite merely one of the two Suras.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 503.

Sura Duhā
(The Glorious Morning Light)

No. 93 (verses 1-5)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ
١ وَالضُّحٰى ○
٢ وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا سَجٰى ○
٣ مَاوَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلٰى ○
٤ وَلَلْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْاُوْلٰى ○
٥ وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيْكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضٰى ○

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. *"By the Glorious Morning Light,"*
2. *"And by the Night when it is still,*
3. *"Your Lord has neither forsaken you nor has He become displeased."*
4. *"And surely the hereafter will be better for you than the present (life)."*
5. *"And soon your lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased."*

The Occasion of Revelation:

Many narrations have been cited about the the occasion of revelation of this Sura, of which the following is the most clear:

Ibn-Abbas says that fifteen days had passed since the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) had received any revelation. During this time, the pagans of Mecca taunted Mohammad and said that his Lord had forsaken him and was displeased with him. They added that if he had been right about his

divine mission, the revelation would not have ceased for him. Then, the aforementioned Sura descended (and put an end to their statements).

It is noteworthy that when this Sura was revealed, according to a tradition, the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* told Gabriel: *"You delayed while I was looking forward to seeing you."*.

And, then, Gabriel answered him: *"I was more eager than you, but I am a missionary servant and do not descend unless by my Lord's leave."*

Another tradition cites that a number of Jews came to the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* and asked him some questions about the stories of Zul-qarnain, the men of the cave, and the creation of the Spirit. He told them that he would inform them the next day, but he did not add to his statement: *"If Allah wills"* . This caused the inspiration to cease for a length of time and, consequently, the enemies began talking and jearing at him. Hence, the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* felt sad and lonely, but later this Sura was revealed to comfort him (This occasion of revelation does not seem so fitting since the Jews and their meeting with the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)*, as well as these kind of questions, usually occured in Medina, not Mecca.).

There is no agreement in narrations as to the exact length of time he had to wait, when the moments of inspiration were stilled. Some have cited it as 12 days, some 15 days, some 19 days, some 25 days and some forty days.

Some narrations also denote that it was only for 2-3 days.

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Commentary:

The Prophet promised to be blessed to his heart's content.

At the beginning of the Sura, again, we are faced with two oaths sworn to the Light and sworn to the Night, saying:

"By the Glorious Morning Light".

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"And by the Night when it is still".

The term /ḍuhā/ means the beginning hours of the day when the sun rises high in the sky and it brightens up everywhere. This is, in fact, the best time of day or, in other words, it is the youth of the day. At this

time of day, in summer, the heat of the sun is not so tormenting, and in winter, it has defeated the coolness of the weather, and it is at this time that we are, both bodily and spiritually, full of energy ready to do whatever we need to do.

The term / sajā / is derived from / sajw / and originally means '***to be quiet, tranquil***'; and it has also been used with the meaning of '***to cover, to darken***' but, here, it confers the meaning of '***quietness***' and '***tranquility***', hence, on the nights when the wind does not blow the terms / laylatun-sājiyah / '***a quiet night***' , and for the sea, with the lack of any storm and roaring waves, the term / bahrun sāj / '***the quiet sea***' are used in the Arabic language.

In any case, what is important about '***night***' is its peace and stillness which naturally gives tranquility to Man's nerves and makes him prepared for his next day struggles or days of spiritual life and work. From this point of view '***night***' is very important and it deserves to be sworn to.

There is a close similarity and relationship between these two oaths and their contents. The '***Glorious Light***' of the day is, metaphorically, the descent of the revelations to the holy heart of the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)***, and the stillness or quiescence of the night is compared to the days and periods of waiting for revelation, which is sometimes necessary in some cases.

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Then, following these two great oaths, it refers to the conclusion and the response of the oaths and says:

"***Your Lord has neither forsaken you nor has He become displeased***".

The term / wadda'a/ is derived from / taudī'/ which means '***to leave***'.

The term / qalā / is based on / qilā'/ in the sense of '***hate and enmity***', and is derived from the root / qalw / meaning '***to throw***'

Rāqib believes that these two refer to one thing, because when one hates another it is as if he throws his heart away and does not accept it back.

In any event, in this verse, there is a particular assurance given to the holy Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)***, for him to know that if after inspiration there were days and periods of waiting, it was due to valid reasons which only *Allah* knew, but He would never be angry with him nor forsake

him as the taunts of his enemies suggested. *Allah's* Care and Mercy are always around him and supporting him.

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Then, it continues by saying:

"And surely the hereafter will be better for you than the present (life)."

O Prophet! You are under His care and Mercy, here, in this world and you will be in a better condition in the *Hereafter*. He will not be displeased with you either in this fleeting world or in the next eternal world. Briefly speaking, you are dear in the present world and dearer in the *Hereafter*.

Some commentators have said that the words / āxirat / and / ūlā / refer to the first and the last parts of the Prophet's life. They believe the verse means: '*O, Prophet you will be more successful in the last part of your life than at the first*' ; that which refers to the expansion and development of Islam when the Muslims were frequently victorious in battles against their enemies, which occured one after another, and the light of Islam removed the gloom of paganism and idolatry in many areas.

To combine these two commentaries is also possible.

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And, finally, He has given him the highest glad tidings where it says:

"And soon your Lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased."

This is a very high respect and honour from *Allah* to His devoted servant, Mohammad *(p.b.u.h.)*, when He states: '*Your Lord will grant you so much so that you shall be well-pleased*' ; that is, in this world he will win over his enemies and Islam will spread all over the world, and, in the Next World, he will be granted the greatest rewards.

Undoubtedly, the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)*, as the last Prophet and guide of all Mankind, is not content with his own salvation alone; certainly he will be pleased and satisfied when his intercession for his followers is accepted, too. For the same reason it is understood from some narrations that this verse is one of the most optimistic verses of the Holy Qur'an and is, also, an evidence that his intercession will be accepted.

There is a tradition from Imam Bāqir (*p.b.u.h.*) from his father Imam Zayn-al-'ābidīn *(p.b.u.h.)*, from his uncle Mohammad-ibn-Hanafiyah,from his father Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali *(p.b.u.h.)* which says that the Messenger of *Allah (p.b.u.h)* said: "***On doomsday, I will stay in the state of intercession and intercede for the sinners of my community so much so that Allah will say: 'Did you become satisfied, O Mohammad? ' and twice I will reply in the affirmative.***"

Then, Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) addressed a group of the citizens of Kūfa (a city in Iraq) and added: "***Do you believe that the most hopeful verse of the Holy Qur'an is the verse: 'Say: O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah...' "*** **(Sura Zumar, No. 39, verse 53) ?**

The group responded that they did, indeed, believe it.

Then, he said: ***"But we, the Household of the Prophet (Ahl-ul-Bait) say that the most hopeful verse of the Holy Qur'an is thus: 'And soon your Lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased' ".*** [1]

Needless to say, the intercession of the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* demands some conditions. He will not intercede for just anyone nor can any sinful person have such an expectation.

Another tradition from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) says: ***"The Messenger of Allah entered Fatimal 's home when she, wearing rough clothes of camel wool, was grinding grain with one hand and nursing her child with the other. He, having tears in his eyes, advised his daughter to tolerate the hardship and the bitterness of this world for the sweetness of the Next World, because Allah had revealed to him 'And soon your Lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased' ".*** [2]

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1 Abul-Futūh Rāzi, vol. 12, p. 110.

2 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 55.

Explanation:

The Philosophy Behind the Discontinuation of the Revelations:

Looking at the aforementioned verses, altogether, it is well understood that the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) was not absolutely free and all that he had were from *Allah*, even the revelation; there can be a pause in descending revelation whenever *Allah* wills and it continues to be descended when He wills. Maybe the pause happened in order to be an answer to those who wanted the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) to bring them miracles, extemporarily, according to their definite wishes, or to change some creeds or some verses, however, he would answer that it was not for him, of his own accord, to change them (as **Sura Yunus, No. 10, verse 15** avows).

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Sura Ḍuhā
(The Glorious Morning Light)

No. 93 (verses 6-11)

٦ اَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيماً فَاٰوىٰ ○
٧ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَاۤلاًّ فَهَدىٰ ○
٨ وَوَجَدَكَ عَاۤئِلاً فَاَغْنىٰ ○
٩ فَاَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلاَ تَقْهَرْ ○
١٠ وَاَمَّا السَّاۤئِلَ فَلاَ تَنْهَرْ ○
١١ وَاَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ○

6. "Did He not find you an orphan and sheltered (you)?"

7. "And He found you wandering and guided (you)."

8. "And He found you in need and made you free of need."

9. "Therefore treat not the orphans with harshness,"

10. "And for the one who asks, repulse not,"

11. "And as for the Bounties of your Lord, do proclaim (it)."

Commentary:

As a Sign of Gratitude for the Bounties of Your Lord ....

As we mentioned before, the Sura mostly tends to comfort the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) and enumerates the Divine graces granted to him. Then, in relation to the former verses containing this very meaning, the following verses begin by mentioning three particular blessings of Allah's Bounties to the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*); and along with them it gives him three important instructions:

"Did He not find you an orphan and sheltered (you)? "

'(O' Mohammad) you were in your mother's womb when your father, 'Abdullāh, died. I caused you to be raised in the lap of your grandfather ('Abdul-Muttalib).'

'You were six years old when your mother died and you, from this point of view, became lonely, but,I increased the love for you in the heart of your uncle ('Abū-Tālib)'.

'You were eight years old when your grandfather, 'Abdul-Muttalib, died ' . 'I appointed your uncle to serve you and support you and he showered you with love and care in protecting you'.

'Yes, you were an orphan and I sheltered you'.

Some commentators have cited many other meanings about this verse that are not compatible with its appearance. For example, the meaning of orphan, here, is said to be a person who is unique in grace and holiness just as a unique piece of jewelry is called '***an orphan jewel***'. According to this idea the meaning of this verse would be, '***Allah found you unique in grace and honour, therefore, He selected you and gave you the prophethood***'.

Another meaning is that: 'You, yourself, were an orphan one day, but, We selected you to be a protector of orphans and a leader for mankind '.

Without doubt, the first interpretation is the most appropriate in every respect and is more harmonious with the content of the verse.

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Then, attention is paid to the second blessing and says:

"And He found you wandering and guided (you)".

'Yes, you were not acquainted with prophecy at all and it was Us Who enlightened your heart with a Light by which you could guide Mankind' ; as, in another occasion it says: *"...Thou knewest not (before) what was Revelation, and what was Faith, but We have made the (Qur'an) a Light, wherewith We guide such of Our servants as We will ..."* (**Sura Shurā, No. 42, verse 52**).

It is clear that before receiving his prophetic mission, the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* lacked this Divine emanation. *Allah* helped him and guided him, as **Sura Yusuf, No 12, verse 3** says: *"We do relate unto thee the most beautiful of stories, in that We reveal to thee this (portion of)*

Qur'an: before this, thou too were among those who knew it not.".

Surely, if *Allah* had not helped the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* with His hidden assistance in guiding him, he would have never succeeded on the path to his goals.

Therefore, the term / ḍalālat / '***aberration***' , here, does not mean '***the absense of faith, monotheism, piety and virtue***', but referring to the above verses, and according to the statements of many commentators, it means '***unacquaintance with the secrets of prophecy, the laws of Islam and similar facts***', but,later and after being appointed to the prophetic mission, the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* learned them all with *Allah's* help and guidance.

In **Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verse 282** when stating the philosophy of severalty of witnesses for writing loan documents involving future payment, it says: "***...so that if one of them errs, the other can remind...***" . In this verse the term / ḍalālat / is used only with the sense of forgetfulness with reference to the phrase /faθakkir/ '***then remind***' .

There are additional commentaries given on the verse. For example, it means that '***you*** were unknown and *Allah* bestowed on you so many gifts of His blessings that you became quite well-known everywhere'.

Or, 'you were lost several times: Once in the valleys of Mecca when you were supported by 'Abdul-Muttalib. Another time when your nursing period had finished and your foster mother, Halīmah Sa'īdiyah, was taking you to Mecca to give you to 'Abdul-Muttalib, then you became lost on the way. And, the third time when your uncle was going to Shām (Syria) in a caravan and you were with him, and you lost the way in the dark of night. *Allah* guided you, on all occasions, and led you either to your loving grandfather or uncle' .

It is worthy to note that the term / ḍāll /, from the point of terminology, has two shades of meaning: '***lost***' and '***misled***'. For instance, it is said : '***knowledge is the lost item of a believer***' (meaning that a believer is always searching for more knowledge). And, thus, it is also used with the meaning of '***hidden***' and '***absent***', as: "***...What! When we lie, hidden and lost, in the earth, shall we indeed be in a Creation renewed?***" (**Sura Sajdah, No. 32, verse 10**).

If the word / ḍāll /, mentioned in the verse under dicussion, is

used with the meaning of '*lost*', or if it means '*misled*' or '*astray*', the purpose is that the path of prophecy was out of his reach before his appointment or, in other words, the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* had nothing from his own and what he had was from *Allah*. Thus, there will be no problem in using either term.

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Then, referring to the third blessing, it says:

"And He found you in need and made you free of need"

'*Allah* attracted the attention, to you, of that sincere pious lady, Khadījah, so she could give you all her wealth to use for your great and holy aims on the way of Islam. And, later, at the time of the glory of Islam, He paved the way for you to reach abundant riches through wars, enabling you to become independent in attaining your great goals.'

On commenting about these verses, there is a tradition from Imam Ali-ibn Musā-r-Rizā (*p.b.u.h.*) who said: *"Did He not find you an orphan or a unique person among His creatures and sheltered people with you; and He found you wandering or unknown among the people who did not know your greatness and then He led them to you; and He found you* as *a custodian for them from the point of knowledge and made them free of need by you?"* .[1]

This tradition, of course, refers to the hidden meaning of the verse, otherwise the outward appearance of it is the very same that was said in the above.

We should never think that by making the above comments, which are understood from the appearance of the verses, that it would decrease the high value of the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), or that it is a negative idea from *Allah* about Mohammad (*p.b.u.h.*). On the contrary, it is, indeed, the statement of His grace and respect towards the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) which refreshes his great soul.

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With the conclusion of the previous verses, the next verses command the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) with three important instructions. Although they are directly addressing Mohammad *(p.b.u.h.)*, they are

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 506.

surely applied to everyone. At first, it says:

"Therefore, treat not the orphans with harshness",

The term / taqhar / is based on / qahr / and, as Rāqib cites in his book, Mufradāt, it means '***prevalence with contempt***'. But, the term is used with either of these two senses, separately, and, here, '***contempt***' seems to be more fitting.

This shows that in relation to orphans, even though feeding and donating are considered highly commendable actions, it is more important to respect them and to be kind and spiritually helpful to them, or to satisfy their emotional needs. That is why it is narrated in a tradition from the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** that he said: "***He who touches an orphans' head, affectionately, Allah will bestow on him as many rays (of blessings) on the Day of Final Judgement, as the number of the orphans' hair which touch under the person's hand.***" .

It seems as if *Allah* is telling the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) that 'you, yourself, have been an orphan and suffered from the pain of orphanhood. Now, be careful of the orphans with all your heart and treat them with tender affection and respect, and quench their thirsty souls with kindness'.

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In the next verse another command is presented:

"And for the one who asks, repulse not",

The term / tanhar / is derived from the root / nahara / which means '***to repulse***' or '***to repel by discourtesy or coldness***' , and it is not improbable that its root is the same as the term /nahr/ with the meaning of '***the running stream***', since it flows with violence.

In order to specify who is meant by the term / sā'il / '***petitioner***', there are several commentaries which have been put forth. It could mean:

1. Those who have some questions on scientific, religious and theological matters. This, as a subdivision, is understood from the verse: "***And He found you wandering and guided (you)***". 'Then, you, too, spread this divine guidance and tried to guide the needy and did not repulse any petitioner'.
2. Those who are in need of finance and come to you. Help them

and do not make them hopeless by repelling them.

3. Those who are poor in both knowledge and finances. *Allah* orders Mohammad (*p.b.u.h.*) to respond, positively, to those who make a request of any type. This idea is fitting both with divine guidance to the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) and sheltering him when he was an orphan.

Strangely enough, some commentators, in order to prove that the term / sā'il / '*petitioner*', here, means only '*a petitioner who is asking for knowledge*', have said that the term has never been used in the Holy Qur'an with the sense of '*financial help*'. [1]

But, it has frequently appeared in the Qur'an with this meaning, such as **Sura Zāriyāt, No. 51, verse 19**: "*And in their wealth and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy) him who asked, and him who (for some reason) was prevented (from asking)*" . Also, from **Sura Ma'ārij, No. 70, verse 25** and **Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verse 177** are other examples containing this idea.

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Finally, in the third and last command, it says:

"*And as for the Bounties of your Lord, do proclaim (it)*".

Announcing the bounties is sometimes done by statements, containing thankfulness and gratitude and that is far from pride and haughtiness, and sometimes by action through donation and charity from those bounties, on the path of *Allah*, in a way that shows He has given him much Bounty.

This is the style of generous, noble people that when a blessing befalls them they proclaim it and thank *Allah* and their behavior also confirms and reinforces this fact. On the contary, the jealous, begrudging, miserly persons groan and moan all the time and even if they were to get the whole world they would insist on covering over the favours; their appearance is poor, their statements are full of weeping and complaining; and their actions illustrate poverty, too.

This is when the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) is reported to have said: "*When Allah gives a servant a bounty, it pleases Him to see the signs of the bounty on him*". [2]

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1 'Abduh Commentary, Section: 'Amma, p. 113.

2 Nahj-ul-Fisāhah, Tradition 686.

Therefore, the concluding meaning of the verse is that in appreciation of the fact that '*Allah* made you free of need, bountifully, when you were in need; your duty is that you should make that Divine Bounty spread far and wide and proclaim it and share it by speech and action.'

But, some commentators have said that '***bounty***', here, means only spiritual bounties, such as, prophethood and the Holy Qur'an which the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** was called to announce and spread. And this is the meaning of '***announcing the Bounty***'.

It is, also, probable that it applies to all material and spiritual bounties.

So, on commenting on this verse, Imam Sādiq (***p.b.u.h.***) is narrated to have said: "***Announce them all, whatever Allah has endowed to you, from merits, sustenance, goodness, and guidance***". [1]

Another tradition from the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), as a general admonition, says: "***He who is endowed a blessing and it is not seen on him, is called an enemy of Allah and an opponent to His Bounties***". [2]

We conclude this subject with a tradition from Hazrat Ali ***(p.b.u.h.)*** who is reported to have said: "***Surely Allah, the Most Bountiful, likes bounties; and also likes to see the signs of His bounties on His servants.***". [3]

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1 Majma-'al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 507.

2 Tafsīr-i-Qurtabī, vol. 10. p. 7192. A similar meaning is found in al-Kāfī, vol. 6, Tradition 2.

3 Furū'-i-Kāfī, vol. 6, p. 438.

Supplication:

O Lord! Your Bounties are beyond what can be announced. Do not restrain them from us, and increase them with your generosity .

O Lord! We are encompassed by your grace in this world. We hope for the same in the Next World.

O Lord! Help us to be always the advocators of the deprived and the supporters of the rights of the orphans.

The End

Sura Ḍuhā
(The Glorious Morning Light)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Inshirāḥ (The Expansion)

No. 94 (8 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

It is commonly said that this Sura was revealed soon after Sura Ḍuhā; and its contents confirm this, since, again in this Sura, some of the Divine Bounties are counted for the holy Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)***. In fact, there were three important Bounties mentioned in the previous Sura (Ḍuhā), and, there are three magnificent Bounties mentioned in Inshirāḥ, too. Those Bounties were of material and spiritual Bounties, whereas these, in this Sura, are all of the spiritual ones. The theme, in this Sura, mainly pivots on three different subjects:

The first is the expression of these triple Bounties; the second is the good news for the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) informing him that his burden and difficulties of his prophetic mission will be removed soon; and the third is that attention should be paid to *Allah* , alone, and be hopeful and encouraged in worship and supplication to Him.

As it was mentioned before, according to the traditions of Ahlul-Bait (***p.b.u.th.***) these two Suras are considered as one and, then, in recitation of prayers, both of them are recited to form one complete Sura.

A careful examination of the contents of these two Suras leaves no doubt that they are quite closely related to each other. Again, a similar case is found for **Sura Fīl** and **Sura Quraish** which will be dealt with later.

The above statements make it clear that this Sura (Inshirāḥ) has been revealed in Mecca, but with regard to the verse: ***"And We exalted for you your reputation"*** , some believe that it has been revealed in Medina when the name of the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** and Islam had been

known everywhere. But, this statement is not enough to prove their idea, because the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)*, with all the problems that he had in Mecca, was completely known and his rise and invitation to Islam were talked about everywhere and in most gatherings, and also his reputation was spread in all parts of Arabia, especially in Medina, by the annual gathering of Hajj pilgrims.

The Virtue in Studying Sura Inshirāh:

On the virtue of studying this Sura, the holy Prophet is reported to have said:

"He who recites this Sura will be rewarded the same as the one who met Mohammad unhappy and brought the grief out from his heart." [1]

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10. p. 507.

Sura Inshirāḥ
(The Expansion)

No. 94 (8 Verses)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ اَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَکَ صَدْرَکَ ○
٢ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْکَ وِزْرَکَ ○
٣ اَلَّذِیْ اَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَکَ ○
٤ وَرَفَعْنَا لَکَ ذِکْرَکَ ○
٥ فَاِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ یُسْراً ○
٦ اِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ یُسْراً ○
٧ فَاِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانْصَبْ ○
٨ وَاِلٰی رَبِّکَ فَارْغَبْ ○

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Sura Inshirāh
(The Expansion)

No. 94 (8 Verses)

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Have We not expanded for you your breast? "
2. "And We removed from you your burden,"
3. "Which weighed down your back?"
4. "And We exalted for you your reputation? "
5. "Then, surely with hardship comes ease:"
6. "Surely, with hardship comes ease,"
7. "So when you have finished (with your immediate task), still strive hard, (then toil),"
8. "And to your Lord turn (all) your attention."

Commentary:

We Endowed You With Various Bounties!

The verses are stated in a loving and affectionate tone which shows the extreme grace of *Allah* to the holy Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)***.

In the first verse, pointing to the greatest bounty of *Allah*, it says:

"Have We not expanded for you your breast? "

The term /našrah/ is based on /šarh/ which, according to Rāqib cited from his book, Mufradāt, means '***to stretch pieces of flesh and produce the thinner layers***'. Then, he adds that the objective point of '***expansion of the breast***' is its expansion with the Divine Light and His bestowed stillness and tranquility. Further, he says that '***explaining the difficulties of speech***' means its expansion and to explain its hidden meanings. In any case, undoubtedly, the objective point of '***expansion of the breast***' is its metaphorical meaning, here, which refers to the expansion of thought and the holy spirit of the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)***. The

very expansion can have a broader meaning that consists of both the expansion of knowledge of the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* through inspiration and revelation, and the expansion of his patience and perseverance against the sabotage and obstructions of his enemies and opponents.

It is in the same light as when Moses is told *"Go thou to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds"*, (**Sura Ṭaḥā, No. 20, verse 24**), the response is: *"(Moses) said: O my Lord! Expand me my breast"*, (**Sura Ṭaḥā, No. 20, verse 25**).

In another Sura the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* is told: *"So wait with patience for the command of thy Lord, and be not like the companion of the fish ...."*; (Jonah met with hostility, but fled from his enemies and suffered so much trouble, **Sura Qalam, No. 68, verse 48**).

In fact, the phrase *'expansion of the breast'* is in contrast with the phrase *'distress of the breast'*, as this verse: *"We do indeed know how your heart is distressed at what they say "*, (**Sura Al-Ḥijr, No. 15, verse 97**). Basically, no great leader can face his difficulties without the expansion of his breast. In this process he whose mission is the most important among the others, like the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)*, should have the greatest expansion of breast of all in order to be strong enough to withstand all difficulties and obstructions of the enemies; and be capable of answering any complicated question and solve the grievous problems standing in his way. And, this was the greatest divine gift endowed to the Messenger of Allah.

That is why the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) in a tradition said: *"I asked a favour from Allah but I wished I had not done it. I said: O, Allah! Some of the prophets before me had the ability to order the wind to blow or to make the dead come alive; and I was told by Allah 'Did He not find you an orphan and sheltered you?'; I answered that I was. Then, I was told further: 'And He found you wandering and guided you?', and I answered that I was; then, He questioned: 'Have We not expanded for you your breast?', and I answered: 'Yes, my Lord' "*. [1]

This tradition shows that the gift of the *'expansion of the breast'* is something beyond the miracles of the prophets. If a person studies the Prophet's conditions, carefully, and sees the amount of his *'expansion of the breast'* in difficult, complicated situations in his life, he will, indeed,

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 508.

be certain that it could not be done through ordinary ways, but it was surely with divine approval.

Here, some have said that the objective point of the phrase '***expansion of the breast***' is the event that happened to the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** when he was a child or youth in which the angels of Heaven came, (and spiritually) opened his breast, took out his heart, washed it purified and filled it with knowledge, mercy and grace. [1]

It is obvious that the tradition does not mean his bodily heart. It metaphorically, points to the divine assistance to the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** from the point of spirit and intention, and his purification from any frailty or devilish temptation.

But, whatever the case may be, there is no reason that the current verse relates particularly to this event. It has a broader meaning of which this story may be considered one of its examples.

It was by the very '***expansion of the breast***' that the holy Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** could solve all the problems of his prophecy most successfully, and fulfilled, very well, all the duties concerned.

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Then, attention is paid to another gift of His great gifts bestowed on the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)***. It says:

"And We removed from you your burden,"

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"Which weighed down your back?"

The term /wizr/ means '***weight***'; the term / wazīr / '***minister***' is derived from the same meaning, since he carries the weight of responsibility of the government. Sins are called /wizr/ because they are weights on the back of the sinner.

The term / anqaḍa / is based on / naqḍ / which means '***to untwist, to untie the knot of a rope***', then, the word means '***to untwist, as a load, getting loose on the back.***'

Thus, the above verse means that '*Allah* took that heavy load from your back'.

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1 Tafsīr-i-Durr-al-Manthūr, (cited in Al-Mīzān, vol. 20, p. 452) and Tafsīr-i-Fakhr-i-Rāzī, vol. 32, p. 2.

What kind of load was it that *Allah* took from the back of His Messenger? The evidences from the verses clearly show that its objective meaning has been the difficulties of the path of prophecy and the invitation to the monotheism and unity of *Allah*, and removing the traces of corruption in that environment. Not only the Prophet of Islam (***p.b.u.h.***) but, also, all the prophets were faced with such great difficulties at the beginning of their missions. They overcame those difficulties by only the help of *Allah*, with the difference that the conditions of time and evironment, for the Messenger of Islam, were more grave and heavier.

Some have commented on the term /wizr/ with the sense of the '***weight of revelation***' at the onset of its descent. Others have rendered it to mean the misled and enmity of the pagans. Still others have related it to their extraordinary tortures. Yet still, some have related it to the grief caused by the death of his uncle, Abū-Tālib, and his wife, Khadījah. And, finally, some have commented on it as his sinlessness and infallibility.

But, apparently, the first commentary is the most fitting among all and the others are its embellishments.

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For the third gift, it says:

"And We exalted for you your reputation?"

'Your name, accompanied with the name of Islam, stands the highest everywhere and among all leaders. A higher rank is that your name is always mentioned with the name of *Allah* all mornings and evenings at the time of prayer-call', that is, the profession of your prophecy is completed together with the profession of *Allah*'s unity which is the only phrase needed, in Islam, denoting the evidence of being Muslim.

What a magnificent honour it is! And what a lofty rank higher than this could be thought of!

On commenting about this verse, there is a tradition from the holy Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** that says: ***"Gabriel told me that Allah says: 'Whenever My name is mentioned your name is also mentioned following it (which itself is enough to show your high rank)'."***

The word /laka/ is used as an emphasis to say that, inspite of all

those impediments and enmities, the name and fame of the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) were wide spread.

A question arises, here, as to whether this Sura was revealed in Mecca or not, however, the spread of Islam, the removal of the difficulties of prophethood, the conversion of the prophet's galling burden into joy and triumph, and the expansion of his reputation, all over the world, happened in Medina.

To answer this question, some have said that the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) was previously informed of its glad tidings and it removed the burden of grief from his heart. Some others have said that the verb, in the past tense, here, conveys the future meaning, which is glad tidings for the future.

Some parts of these affairs happened in Mecca especially during the last year of the thirteen years, there, when the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* was busy inviting people to Islam and the divine religion penetrated into the hearts of many individuals and, consequently, the difficulties partly decreased. Then, he was known everywhere and the way was fairly paved for the future great triumphs.

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In the next verse, *Allah* gives His Messenger the most important glad tidings of hope:

"***Then, surely with hardship comes ease:***".

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Again, it emphasizes that:

"***Surely, with hardship comes ease***".

O, Prophet! Do not grieve for the difficulties and troubles. They will convert to ease and comfort. The impediments of the enemies do not last too long, and the financial deprivation and economical difficulties of Muslims will not continue with the same form of poverty for ever.

He who suffers the hardships and stands against the storms of miseries with patience will surely taste the sweetness of its fruit. It will be the day when the voice of the enemies faints, their impediments remain in vain, the ways of success and progress are paved, and following the path, the path of *Allah,* is easy.

Although some of the commentators have rendered these verses into the general financial poverty of Muslims at the beginning of Islam, the broadness of the meaning of the verses envelops all the difficulties. These two verses are stated in a style which shows that they are not allotted only to the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* himself or his time. The rule is general and for all. They encourage the pure Muslim believers to know and be sure that whatever difficulties or troubles are encountered by men, *Allah* always provides a solution a way out, a relief, a way to lead to ease and happiness. Moreover, the solution or relief does not merely come AFTER the 'difficulty' : it is provided WITH it.

It is the glad tidings or promise of *Allah* that enlightens the heart, makes it hopeful for triumph, and clears Man's soul of the dirt of its hopelessness.

The holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* is reported to have said: "***Do know that surely with hardship comes ease, and surely with patience comes victory, and surely with distress comes relief.*** "

There is a tradition from Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) which says that a woman complained about her husband to Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) that he did not provide anything for her but, it was in the case that he was, indeed, poor. Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) withheld imprisoning him, and advising her to patience. replied to her: "***Surely, with hardship comes ease***".

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Finally, in the last verses of this Sura, it says:

"***So when you have finished (with your immediate task), still strive hard, (then toil)***".

Never be idle or lazy at all. Do not put striving and effort aside. Always be busy and when you finish one task, begin another.

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"***And to your Lord turn (all) your attention.***"

In any condition, seek His contentedness and try to approach His nearness.

According to what was said, the verse has a vast meaning that contains the sense of '***relieving of a task go to the next***' which recommends the accomplishment of all activities for the sake of *Allah*. But most of

the commentators have cited some limited meanings for the verse, each of which can be accepted as a justification.

Some have said that it means 'When you finish your obligatory prayers pay attention to supplication and ask *Allah* to give you what you want'.

Or, when you finish your religious duties, get up for night prayers.

Or, when you finish the affairs of the material world, refer to the spiritual world and say prayers and do religious duties.

Or, when you finish the religious duties, go to the recommended acts advised by *Allah*.

Or, when you finish the holy war against the enemy, stand up for worship.

Or, when you finish the holy war against the enemy, combat against your low desires.

Or, 'when you did finish your duty of prophecy, you would offer intercession'.

Among the numerous narrations that the famous scholar Hāfiz Hakīm Huskāny has cited in Shawāhid-al-Tanzīl, there is one from Imam Sādiq ***(p.b.u.h.)*** in which, commenting on the verse as a meaning, he said: ***"When you finish, appoint the leadership (wilāyah) of Ali (p.b.u.h.)"***.[1]

In his commentary, Qartabī has narrated from some that the meaning of the verse is that '***when you finish, do apppoint an Imam, who is your substitute***'. (Although he, himself, did not assume the meaning).

Regarding this fact that the verse does not define what matter he finishes, and, furthermore, the term /fansab/ derived from /nasb/ meaning '***suffer and toil***', the verse refers to a general principle of which the aim is to prevent the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)***, as a model, from being in rest after finishing an important task and to notify him of the continuous effort in life.

Considering this idea, it is made clear that all the above commentaries are right, but, each of them is as one justification of this vast and general meaning.

What an instructive plan it is! It consists of the secret of success and development. Basically, leisure and full tranquility cause fatigue,

1 Shawāhid-al-Tanzīl, vol. 2, p. 349 (Tradition 1116-1119).

decrease freshness, bring laziness and weariness; and in many cases they are the origin of corruption and many kinds of sin.

It is noteworthy that different statistics show that the scope of iniquity sometimes goes up to seven times as much when the schools and educational institutes are closed and the students are on holiday.

In any event, the whole Sura states the special favour of *Allah* to the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h)* and encourages him to stand firm against the difficulties of his Mission and, also, promises him victory on the path of divine prophecy.

Meanwhile, the statements are promising, hope-instilling, constructive and creative for all human beings, particularly those who follow on the road of justice.

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Explanation:

As it was stated in the aforementioned text, there are many traditions (cited by different groups of Muslim scholars) narrated on the meaning of this verse: ***"So when you have finished (with your immediate task), still strive hard, (then toil)"***, which say that the purpose of the verse is (as the statement of one justification) the appointment of Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) to the caliphate (leadership) after the fulfillment of the mission of prophethood. Still, some, suggesting various misleading ideas, show some prejudice on the opposite way.

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Supplication:

O Lord! Empty our hearts from self-love and fill them instead with love for you.

O Lord! You, Yourself, have promised that there is ease with any hardship. Relieve the present Muslims from the great difficulties and hardships originated from their enemies.

O Lord! Your gifts and bounties endowed to us are abundant. Bestow on us the success of being grateful for them.

The End

Sura Inshirāḥ
(The Expansion)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Tīn
(The Fig)

No. 95 (8 Verses)

Contents of Sura Tīn:

The theme in this Sura, indeed, pivots on the subject of the creation of Man; the finest mould, and the processes of his development and his lowliness. The subject begins with some comprehensive oaths at the beginning of the Sura, and then, after enumerating some of the sources of Man's victory and salvation, it concludes with the emphasis on Resurrection and the absolute Sovereignty of *Allah*.

The holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) is narrated to have said: "***Allah will endow, in this world, the two qualities of safety and certainty to the person who recites it (Sura Tīn). And, when he dies, He will give him rewards equal to the reward of fasting one day (multiplied) by the number of all those who have recited this Sura.***" [1]

This Sura has been revealed in Mecca. The evidence is the verse, itself: "***And this city of security (Mecca)***", containing the demonstrative adjective '***this***' which refers to something near.

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 510.

Sura Tīn
(The Fig)

No. 95 (verses 1-8)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ وَ اَلتِّينِ وَ اَلزَّيْتُونِ

٢ وَطُورِ سِينِينَ

٣ وَ هَذَا اَلْبَلَدِ اَلأَمِينِ

٤ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا اَلإِنْسانَ فِيَ أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

٥ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سافِلِينَ

٦ إِلاَّ اَلَّذِينَ ءامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ اَلصَّالِحاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ

٧ فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالدِّينِ

٨ أَلَيْسَ اَللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ اَلْحاكِمِينَ

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Sura Tīn
(The Fig)

No. 95 (verses 1-8)

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "By the Fig and the Olive,"

2. "And (Mount) Tūr of Sīnīn,"

3. "And this city of security (Mecca),"

4. "We have indeed created man in the best of moulds,"

5. "Then We render him the lowest of the low,"

6. "Save those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them is a reward unending."

7. "What then makes you reject thereafter the Last Judgement?"

8. "Is not Allah the Most Just of judges?"

Commentary:

We have created Man in the finest of moulds.

There are four meaningful oaths at the beginning of this Sura to be as an introduction to an important statement. It says:

"By the Fig and the Olive,"

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"And (Mount) Tūr of Sīnīn,"

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"And this city of security (Mecca),"

The term / tīn / means '*fig*', and the term / zaytūn / means '*olive*'; the same fruit that is the source of a useful oil.

The oaths are to these two well-known fruits or to something else. There is much difference of opinion among the commentators as to the exact meaning.

Some, of course, say that they mean the same two fruits that

contain the extraordinary nutritive and creative properties. Some others believe that they refer to the two mountains on which the two cities of Damascas and Jeruslem are located, since these two sacred cities are the lands where many great prophets of *Allah* have appeared. These two oaths coordinate with the third and fourth oaths which refer to other sacred lands.

Some have also said that these two mountains are called /tīn / '*fig*' and / zaytūn / '*olive*', because the fig trees are cultivated on one and olives on the other.

Again, some believe that / tīn / '*fig*' refers to the time of Adam when he and Eve clothed themselves with the leaves of the fig tree, in Heaven; and /zaytūn/ '*olive*' refers to the last stage of the deluge at the time of Noah when he sent a pigeon out to search for a piece of land appearing after the flood and it came back bringing a small branch from an olive tree by which Noah understood that the flood was over and dry land had appeared, (hence, the olive branch is a symbol of peace and security).

Furthermore, some think that the term / tīn / '*fig*' refers to Noah's Mosque which was built on Mount Judi of the Ararat range; and that /zaytūn / '*olive*' refers to Jerusalem.

The appearance of the verse, at first glance, denotes to the two known fruits, but with paying close attention to the following oaths they are apt to be two mountains or two sacred centers that are respected.

There is a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) which says that *Allah* selected four cities, among all cities, and He stated these first three verses about them: "***By the Fig and the Olive,***" "***And (Mount) Tūr of Sīnīn,***" "***And the city of security (Mecca),***" that / tīn / is Medina, /zaytūn/ is Jerusalem, /tūr-i-sīnīn/ is Kūfa, and /hāθ-al-balad-il-amīn/ (the city of security) is Mecca. [1]

The purpose of using the term / tūr-i-sīnīn / as rendered by some commentators, seems to be / tūr-i-sīnā / (the Mount of Sīnā) where olive trees, full of fruit, are found.

Sīnā is interpreted as a Mount full of bounties, or full of trees, or beautiful; it is the same Mount that Moses used to visit to perform his supplications.

1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, Commentary, vol. 5, p. 606, Tradition 4.

Some, also, believe that it is a mountain near Kūfa and in the land of Najaf.

Some have cited that / sīnīn / and / sīnā / are one in the same which mean '***bountiful***'.

It is certain that '***the city of security***' refers to Mecca, a land which was known as a secure region even in pagan times. Its sacred character was always respected, and no fighting was allowed in its territory even against criminals and murderers; so, when they reached there they were in complete security.

This land is considered especially important in Islam; so important that its animals, trees and birds should be left in complete security; even more so is the state of people.

It is noteworthy that the word / tīn / '***fig***' is mentioned only in this Sura, which is only once in the whole Qur'an, while the word /zaytūn/ '***olive***' is seen in six clear occurences of all the verses of Holy Qur'an and once it is mentioned by implication where it says; "***Also a tree springing out of Mount Sīnīn, which produces oil, and relish for those who use it for food.***" .

Even if we render these two oaths (about Tīn and Zaytūn) to their first common meanings, i.e. the known '***fig***' and '***olive***', they are meaningful oaths, because: The fig is a very good, nutritious food; a suitable morsel for anyone and any age; free from skin, stone, or commercial additives.

Scientists of nutrition say that the fig can be used as a natural sugar for babies. Sportsmen and also those who are weak or are decrepit, due to old age, can use the fig for food.

It is said that Plato liked figs so much so that some have called it a friend of philosophers; Socrates knew the fig as an absorber of useful materials, in the body, and a repulsor of harmful ones.

Galen arranged a special diet of figs for athletes. In ancient Rome and Greece, too, the champions were given figs to eat.

Scientists, experts on nutrition, say that the fig is full of various vitamins and sugar. It can be used as a remedy for some diseases, particularly when the fig and honey are equally mixed which can be very useful in curing stomach ulcers. Eating dried figs is useful in strengthening the memory. In brief, because of having mineral elements which cause the balance between the bodily faculties and the blood, the

fig has been introduced as a food appropriate for all, at any age and in any condition.

A tradition narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-Mūsa-r-Rizā (*p.b.u.h.*) says: "***The fig removes the bad smell of the mouth. It strengthens the gums and bones, causes the hair to grow, puts an end to some ailments so that medicine is not needed.***" Then, he added: "***The fig is the most comparable thing to the fruits of Heaven.***" .[1,2]

Now, let us consider the '*olive*' ! Food specialists and some scientists who have spent a large part of their lives studying the various properties of fruits, think of the olive and its oil as being of extraordinary importance. They believe that those who wish to be always healthy should use this elixir of life.

Olive oil is a close companion of the liver in Man. Furthermore, for treating the troubles of the kidneys, biliary calculus, renel colic, hepatic colic, and for treating constipation, olive oil is very effective.

Olive oil also contains a variety of vitamins, besides having phosphorus, sulphur, calcium, iron, potassium and manganese.

Ointments made of olive oil and garlic are recommended useful for some rhematism ailments. The crystals of cholesterol in the gallbladder may be dissolved by a diet of olive oil.

It is narrated from Amir-al-Mo'minеen Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) thus: "***(The people of) the house where vinegar and olive oil are used in their meal will not be in poverty, and this has been in the prophets' meal.***")

A tradition narrated from Imam Ali-ibn Musa-r-Rizā (*p.b.u.h.*) says: "***Olive oil is a good food stuff. It makes the smell of the mouth sweet, removes phlegm, makes the colour of the face cheerful, strengthens the nerves, puts an end to sickness and weakness, and quenches the fire of wrath.***" .

Let us conclude this subject with a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) who said: "***Have olive oil in your food and grease your body with it since it is from a Holy Tree.***" .

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After mentioning these four significant matters, it refers to what

1 Kāfi. vol. 6, p. 358. Behār-al-Anwār, vol. 66, p. 184.

2 The First University and the Last Prophet, vol. 9, p. 90.

the oaths are for; thus:

"We have indeed created man in the best of moulds."

The term / taqwīm / means to form something into an appropriate shape in a moderate regulation; the broadness of the meaning refers to the fact that *Allah* has created man proportionately in all respects; both from the bodily point of view and from the spiritual and rational point of view, because He has settled all faculties in him and prepared him appropriately to cover a great path towards development. Although man is a 'microcosm', He has set the 'macrocosm' in him and has promoted him to such a high position that it is said: ***"We have honored the sons of Adam..."*** **(Sura Banī Isrā-īl, No. 17, verse 70)**, and man about whose creation He says: ***". .So blessed be God, the Best to create! "*** **(Sura Mo'minūn, No. 23, verse 14)**.

But, if the same 'man', with all his privileges, deviates from the path of truth he will fall so deep as unto ***'the lowest of the low'*** and will be abased to the lowest possible position. Hence, in the next verse, it says:

"Then We render him the lowest of the low." .

As it is known, there are always deep valleys beside high mountains. Similarly, for Man's exalted position as Allah's vicegerent, there is a greivous lowness. And why not? If Man uses his faculties aright and follows *Allah's* law, he will reach the high and noble destiny intended for him. But, if he rebels against *Allah*, and, using his talents and faculties, follows after evil, he will fall even lower than the beast; ***'the lowest of the low'***.

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"Save those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them is a reward unending."

The term / mamnūn / is based on / man / which, here, means ***'broken off, or deficiency'***, hence, the term / qayru mamnūn / is rendered as ***'an uninterrupted reward without any deficiency'***. Some have interpreted it as ***'the lack of obligation'***, but, the first meaning seems more suitable.

Some have commented on the sentence, ***"Then We rendered him the lowest of the low"*** with the sense of ***'weakness and extreme feebleness of mind due to old age'***, but, this does not fit with the exception in the next

verse. Therefore, with regard to all the verses before and after it, the first commentary seems more proper.

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The next verse, addressing ungrateful Man who is careless about the signs and evidences of the Resurrection, inquires:

"What then makes you reject thereafter the Last Judgment?"

The structure of your body, on the one hand and the structure of the endless universe, on the other, all indicate that the fleeting life of this world cannot be the final goal of the creation or of this splendid, vast universe.

All of them are preliminary to a wider and more complete world; and as the Holy Qur'an points out 'the first form of creation' warns you of that: ***"And you certainly know already the first form of creation: Why then do you not celebrate His praises?"***, (**Sura Wāqi'ah, No. 56, verse 62**).

Every year, plants, in nature, and before our very eyes become renewed and remind us of the scene of death and rebirth, again and again. Each of the uninterrupted stages during the developing period of a foetus is counted as a new resurrection and a new life, and yet, how is it that Man can deny the Reckoning Day?

Considering what was stated in the above, it is clear that the addressee, in this verse, is Man, collectively. The possibility that the addressee is the Messenger of Islam (*p.b.u.h.*) with the meaning of '***having the evidences of the Resurrection, who or what is able to deny you***' seems improbable.

And, also, it becomes clear that the objective meaning of the word / dīn /, here, is not '***religion***'; it means '***The Day of Reckoning***'. The following verse also attests to this idea.

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"Is not Allah the Most Just of judges?"

So, if we take the word / dīn / with the whole meaning of '***religion***', this verse means: '***Are Allah's laws and decrees not wisest of all?***' or '***Allah's creation of Man is full of knowledge and wisdom in all respects.***'.

But, as it was said before, the first meaning seems more fitting.

According to a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*),

whenever he recited **Sura Tin**, and after reciting the verse: "***Is not Allah the Most Just of judges?***" he used to say: "***Yes, and I am the witness to this (that Allah is the Most Just of judges.")*** .

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Supplication:

O Lord! We also confess that You are the Most Just of judges.

O Lord! You created us in the best of moulds. Please help us to be the best, and most successful in our deeds and manners.

O Lord! Going on the path of faith and doing righteous deeds is not possible save with Your Grace; please bestow Your Grace on us.

The End

Sura Tīn
(The Fig)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura 'Alaq (The Clot)

No. 96 (19 Verses)

Contents of Sura 'Alaq:

It is commonly known among the commentators that this Sura is the first Sura that was revealed to the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) of Islam. The contents of the Sura also confirm this idea. Some have said that the first Sura is **Sura Fātiḥah**, or perhaps **Sura Muddaththir**, but, again, this is contrary to what is commonly thought.

First, this Sura addresses the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) and commands him to read or proclaim (the Message).

Then, it refers to the creation of Man out of a mere clot.

Further, it refers to the development of Man, who is taught from the bounty and by the Grace of *Allah*; the soul in him reaching out to knowledge sublime, and the instrument of it, the sanctified Pen.

Thereafter, it speaks about ungrateful Man, and that despite all the blessings and graciousness that *Allah* bestows on him, he rebels.

Following this, it points to the painful chastisement of those who cause a hindrance on the road to guidance and righteous deeds.

Then, the Sura ends with a command to prostration, and of drawing closer to *Allah*.

The Virtue of Studying this Sura:

On the virtue of reciting this Sura, there is a tradition from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) who said: ***"He who recites Sura 'Alaq on a day or a night and passes away on the same day or night, at the time of the Day of Juagment, he will be considered as a martyr and Allah will raise him to life again as a martyr and He will resurrect him as one who has fought the holy war, on the way of Allah, in the presence of the Messenger of Allah."*** [1]

Because of the different words used at the beginning, this Sura is called: **'Alaq**, **Iqra'**, or **Qalam**.

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1 Tafsīr-i-Borhān, vol. 4, p. 478.

Sura 'Alaq
(The Clot)

No. 96 (verses 1-5)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ
١ اِقْرَاْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ ○
٢ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ○
٣ اِقْرَاْ وَ رَبُّكَ الْاَكْرَمُ ○
٤ الَّذِىْ عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ○
٥ عَلَّمَ الْاِنْسَانَ مَالَمْ يَعْلَمْ ○

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Read (Proclaim!) In the Name of your Lord Who created"

2. "Created man, out of a clot (of congealed blood)."

3. "Read (Proclaim), and your Lord is the Most Generous,"

4. "Who taught by the Pen,"

5. "Taught man that which he knew not."

The Occasion of the Revelation:

As it was mentioned in the description of the content of this Sura, the majority of commentators believe that this is the first Sura that came to the heart of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*). Some have even said that all the commentators believe that the first five verses, of the Sura, were the first direct Revelation to the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*). Their contents confirm this idea, too.

Some narrations denote that the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) had gone to Mount Hira when Gabriel came and told him: "*Iqra'*" (Read/

Proclaim). He said that he was not 'versed'. Gabriel embraced him and told him again to proclaim; and the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) repeated the same answer. Gabriel embraced him for a second time, but was given the same answer. Then, for the fourth time he told him: "*Read* (*Proclaim!*) *In the name of your Lord Who created*", (and recited the first five verses).

Finishing the verse, Gabriel then took leave from the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*).

The Messenger of *Allah*, his energy spent due to receiving the first rays of Revelation, went to his wife, Khadījah, and told her: "*Cover me; wrap me in a mantle.*".

The following is a tradition from Tabarsī, in Majma'-al-Bayān, and he cites that the Messenger of Allah told Khadījah that whenever he was alone he heard a voice.

According to Tabarsī, Khadījah told Mohammad (*p.b.u.h.*): "*Allah will not bring anything on you but goodness because you are trustworthy and pay the deposits, you observe bonds of relationship, and you are truthful in speech.*"

Khadījah said this statement and, then, she went to see Waraqah-ibn Nufil. (He was Khadījah's cousin and was of the knowledgeable Arabs.) She described to him what had happened to Mohammad (*p.b.u.h.*) and added that he had heard the voice say: "*O Mohammad say: ' Bismillah-ir-Rahmān-ir-Rahīm, al - Hamd - u - lillāh - i - Rabb - al - 'ālamīn (to the end of Sura Fātihah)'*; and say: *'Lā Ilāha Illallāh'.* ".

Waraqah said: "*Rejoice thou! Rejoice thou! According to what is mentioned in Taurat and Ingeel it is clear that he is the Messenger of Allah and he is the very one that Jesus Christ told about in his glad tidings. He has a religion like that of Moses; he is an apostle. He will be told to fight in the Holy War soon after this, and if I am alive then, I will be with him in that Holy War.*"

Later, when Waraqah died, the Messenger of Allah said: "*I saw him in Heaven (the Heaven of the Lesser Judgment) having a high rank for he had believed in me and confirmed me.*"

There are, of course, some unflattering statements cited in various history books or some commentaries about this period of Mohammad's life which seem incorrect. They are probably inserted by the enemies of Islam to taint both the idea about this divine religion and the person of

the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)*. Regarding what was said above, we are only concerned, here, with these commentaries of the verses, which will be cited in this text.

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Commentary:

Read (Proclaim!) In the Name of your Lord!

In the first verse of the Sura, it addresses the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) and says: ***"Read (Proclaim)! In the Name of your Lord Who created"***.

Some have said that the object is not mentioned in the sentence, which basically would be: '***Read (Proclaim) the Qur'an in the Name of your Lord***', and that is why they have considered this verse as an evidence that /bismillāh/ is combined with the Suras of Qur'an.

It is worthy to note here, first of all, that the emphasis is on the proposition of Lordship and we know that /rabb/ means a '***reformer Lord***' , the one Who is both the master and the cherisher.

Then, to establish the Lordship of *Allah* , it emphatically refers to the '***creation and the existence of this universe***', because the best reason for His Lordship is His Creative attribute. The One Who runs and sustains the universe is its Creator.

This is, indeed, an answer to the pagan Arabs who had accepted the creative power of *Allah* , but, they assumed the lordship and device of this world for their own idols and gods. Besides, the Lordship of the Lord and His Device, in this World, are the best evidence for proving His Being.

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Then, amongst all the creatures of the world, it emphasizes on the best and the most important of them, i.e. Man, and referring to his creation, it says:

"Created man out of a clot (of congealed blood)".

The term /'alaq/ originally means '***to adhere to something***', and hence, some congealed blood or a leech which sticks to the body to suck blood, is called /'alaq/. Since the life-germ, in the course of its first processes until it becomes a foetus, changes to a type of sticking clot which is apparently very worthless, it is, indeed, the basic origin of the creation of Man, then, it makes the power of *Allah* clear that it is He

Who is able to create such a worthy creature from such a lowly unworthy thing.

Some have also said that the objective point of using /'alaq/ , here, is due to the clay of which Adam came from and which was sticky, too. It is obvious that the Creator Who creates this wonderful creature from that sticky piece of clay is apt to be worshipped.

Furthermore, some have considered the term /'alaq/ as meaning '***a possessor of kindness and affection***'. This refers to the social and gregarious manner of men and the love they have for each other which is the main basis of Man's development and progress in the history of his civilization.

Again, some have thought of the term /'alaq/ as referring to '***the male seed***' which they thought much resembled a '***leech***'. It was their understanding that this microscopic creature, which swims in the fluid of men, approaches the woman's 'seed', in the womb, and adheres to it and that by the combining of these two complete 'seeds' Man came into being.

It is true that at the time of the appearance of Islam these problems were not known to Man, but the Holy Qur'an, as a scientific miracle, unveiled the true meaning.

Among these four commentaries, the first one seems more clear, although to combine all of them, together, is also possible.

It is understood, then, from what was said in the above that '***man***', according to one commentary, means Adam, and, according to the other three commentaries, means only 'Man'.

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To emphasize the matter, again it says:

"***Read (Proclaim), and your Lord is the Most Generous***".

Some believe that the second /iqra'/ '***read (proclaim)***' is an emphasis on the first /iqra'/ in the previous verses, while some others say that they are different. In the first sentence, the term requires the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** to read (proclaim) to himself and, in the second sentence, it means to read (proclaim) to people. But, the idea of emphasis seems more appropriate because there is no evidence available to show the difference between them.

In any event, this verse, in fact, is an answer to the statement of

the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) who responded to Gabriel saying: '*I am not versed*' ; and it means: '*you can read (proclaim) because of the extreme graciousness and the extraordinary generosity of your Lord*'.

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Then, it tells about *Allah* Who is the Most Generous and says:

"Who taught by the Pen".

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"Taught man that which he knew not".

In fact, these verses are also an answer to that very statement of the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* who said: '*I am not versed*'. Now, it replies that it is the same *God* Who taught the human being by the '*pen*', and taught him the things that he did not know, and Who is capable of teaching a servant, like 'you', who does not know how to read.

The verse "***Who taught by the Pen***" can be rendered in two ways. The first is that: *Allah* taught writing and the book to Man and it is He Who is able to do this portent; to establish the origin of all sciences, knowledge and civilizations in him.

The second meaning is that through this way and by this means Man is taught all of the sciences and knowledge.

In short, according to one commentary, the objective meaning is '*teaching how to write*' and another commentary says the objective meaning is '*the sciences taught to man by writing*'.

In any case, this is an expressive statement, full of meaning, that was issued in these great verses at the sensitive moments of the onset of revelation.

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Explanations:

The First Revelation Was Accompanied by a Sciential Movement.

These verses, as was mentioned before, according to the belief of most or all commentators, are the first rays of the Divine Light that glittered in to the holy heart of the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*). This incident was a new door opened to humanity, and a new chapter was founded in the history of the human race, and, then, Mankind was bestowed one of the greatest Blessings of *Allah* . The most complete divine religion, which was the last of all religions, was descended. And after that descent, all

the precepts of the religion, the ordinance of *Allah*, was completed according to the sense of "*...this day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion ....*", (**Sura Mā'idah, No. 5, verse 4**).

It is interesting to note that the fact is the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** was unlettered and was not taught, and at the time when the territory of Hijāz was filled with ignorance, in the first verses of this Sura, of the revelation, the proposition of '***science and the Pen***' is emphasized which is mentioned immediately along with the great blessing of '***creation***'.

In fact, at first these verses tell about the devolopment of the '***body***' of Man from such an unworthy thing as a clot, and on the other hand, they speak about the development of his '***soul***' by means of training and education, especially by the pen.

On the day when these verses were revealed, not only in the territory of Hijāz, which was the territory of ignorance, few people valued the pen, but, also, in the civilized world of that time, the pen was worth little.

Today, however, we know that the basis of whole civilizations, different kinds of knowledge, and the progresses of Man in different fields pivots on the existence of the '***pen***' . The rank of scholars has preceded that of the martyrs, because the source for the appearance of the martyrs is really in the ink of the scholars' pen, and, basically, it is their '***pen***' that can change the destiny of individuals in different societies.

In communities, improvements often start by the pen of faithful, believing people who feel responsibility, but, also, vice and corruption originate from poisonous pens, too.

That is why the Holy Qur'an makes an oath to the '***Pen***' and to what the '***Pen***' produces, thus: "***Nūn. By the Pen and by the (Record) which (men) write***", (**Sura Qalam, No. 68, verse 1**).

We know that the whole life of the human being is divided into two distinct periods: The historical period and the prehistorical period.

The historical period begins from the time that the invention of writing appeared on the scene and Man used the '***pen***' and was acquainted with reading and writing and, as a consequence, Man could leave some traces from his life for later generations. Hence, the history of Man can be dealt with from the date he could use the '***pen***'; when the

'*pen*' and '*writing*' appeared in the history of Man's life.

Therefore, from the very early beginning, Islam was founded on the basis of the '*Pen*' and '*knowledge*'; and it is for this same reason that backward people of early Islam could progress in science so much so that they succeeded in introducing and exporting new scientific findings to Europe and all over the world. As the popular European historians confess, it was the light of the knowledge of Muslims that enlightened the darkened feature of medieval Europe and let them enter the gate of the Golden age.

There are many books, in this field, supplied by the European writers, themselves, under different titles such as '*The History of the Civilization of Islam*', or '*Islamic Heritage*'.

How disgraceful is a nation with this historical background and with a rich religion like this to fall behind in the path of science and be in need of non-Muslim nations or even dependant on them!

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Remembrance of Allah in any Condition:

At first, the invitation of the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* started with the remembrance of the Name of *Allah* : "***Read (Proclaim)! In the Name of your Lord...***"

And it is interesting that the whole fruitful life of the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* was associated with His remembrance.

The remembrance of *Allah* accompanied each of his breaths; in his rising, sitting, sleeping, walking, riding, starting, stopping, all in all; he was always with the Name of *Allah*.

When he awakened he used to say: "***Praise be to Allah, Who raises us after our death: and unto Him is the Resurrection***".

Several traditions similar to the above-mentioned one are also cited which conform to this idea. [1]

1 Fī-Zalāl-il-Qur'an, vol. 8, p. 619.

Sura 'Alaq
(Clot)

No. 96 (verses 6-14)

٦ كَلَّآ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَيَطْغٰٓى ○

٧ اَنْ رَّاٰهُ اسْتَغْنٰى ○

٨ اِنَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعٰٓى ○

٩ اَرَاَيْتَ الَّذِىْ يَنْهٰى ○

١٠ عَبْدًا اِذَا صَلّٰى ○

١١ اَرَاَيْتَ اِنْ كَانَ عَلَى الْهُدٰٓى ○

١٢ اَوْ اَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوٰى ○

١٣ اَرَاَيْتَ اِنْ كَذَّبَ وَ تَوَلّٰى ○

١٤ اَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَرٰى ○

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Sura 'Alaq

(Clot)

No. 96 (verses 6-14)

6. "Nay! Most surely man does transgress (all bounds)."

7. "For he thinks himself self-sufficient."

8. "Verily, to your Lord is the return (of all)."

9. "Have you seen him who forbids"

10. "A servant when he prays?"

11. "Have you seen whether he is on (the road of) Guidance?"

12. "Or enjoins piety?"

13. "Have you seen if he rejects and turns away?"

14. "Does he not know that Allah surely sees?"

Commentary:

Do You Not Know That Allah Surely Sees What You Do?

Following the last verses in which some material and spiritual gifts of *Allah* bestowed on Man were mentioned, that which demands his gratitude and absolute submission to Him, here it says:

"Nay! Most surely man does transgress (all bounds)".

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"For he thinks himself self-sufficient".

This is the nature of most human beings, the nature of those who are not acquainted with revelation and are not trained wisely that, when they think they are self-sufficient, they rebel.

Although all of our knowledge and capacities come as gifts from

Allah, Man, in his inordinate vanity and insolence, misinterprets *Allah's* gifts as his own achievements. So, he neither obeys Him nor follows His guidance, nor pays attention to his conscience, nor observes the right and justice.

Not only Man, but, also, no creature will be self-sufficient and free from the help of *Allah*. All of them are always in need of His Grace and His blessings. If His Mercy stops for a moment, just at the same time, all will be destroyed. Man sometimes makes mistakes and, as the verse points out, thinks himself self-sufficient. The delicate sense of the verse is that it says: ***'For he thinks himself self-sufficient'*** and not: ***'For he becomes self-sufficient'***.

Some think that the word 'Man' in the verse, here, means 'Abū-Jahl', who opposed the invitation to Islam from the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) in the very beginning. But, 'Man', here, certainly means Mankind, collectively, and persons like Abū-Jahl are only an example.

At any rate, the verse seems to mean that the Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** should not expect that all people will accept his invitation easily, but he should be prepared to be opposed by the denial and enmity of the transgressors, and know that the road in front of him is full of ups and downs.

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Then, warning the rebels, it says:

"***Verily, to your Lord is the return (of all)***".

And it is *Allah* Who punishes the transgressors for their deeds.

Originally, just as the return of all is to Him and "***...To Allah belongs the heritage of the heaven and the earth...***" (**Sura 'Imrān, No. 3, verse 180**), everything has also been from Him, from the beginning, then, it is not reasonable for Man to think that he is self-sufficient and to become bold, and rebel.

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Next, our attention is turned to a section on the behaviour of the arrogant transgressors who prevent believing people from doing righteous deeds, and says:

"***Have you seen him who forbids***"

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"A servant when he prays?"

Does such a person not deserve the Divine Punishment?

In traditions it is said that Abū-Jahl inquired of the people around him: *"Does Mohammad put his face on the ground (for prostration) amongst you, too?"* They answered that he did. Then, he said: *"By what we take an oath to, if I see him in that state I will tread His neck under my foot"*. At that moment they told him to look; that the Prophet was praying thereabout.

Abū-Jahl went to tread the Prophet's (*p.b.u.h.*) neck under his foot, but when he approached him he stopped and it seemed as if he was pushing something away from himself with his hand. He was asked what was the matter with him, and he answered: *"Suddenly, I saw a ditch of fire between me and him; a frightful thing, and I saw some wings and feathers, too."*

The Messenger of Allah (*p.b.u.h.*) said about this: *"By the One in Whose hand is my life, if he had come close to me, the angels of Allah would have torn his body to pieces and taken them away one by one."*

It was on this occasion that the above verses were revealed. [1]

In conformity with those traditions, the above verses were revealed at the beginning of the Prophetic mission. They were not revealed later when the call of Islam was known to all. Hence, some believe that only the firs five verses of this Sura were revealed at the beginning of the Prophetic mission and the rest were revealed after a considerable length of time.

In any case, this occasion of revelation can never stand as a barrier for the broad meaning of the verse.

To show further emphasis, it says:

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"Have you seen whether he is on (the road of) Guidance?"

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"Or enjoins piety?"

Is it right for him (a man such as Abū-Jahl) to forbid? Can the punishment of such a man be anything but the fire of *Hell*?

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, Commentary, vol. 10, p. 515.

"Have you seen if he rejects and turns away?"

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"Does he not know that Allah surely sees?"

The aforementioned conditional sentence indicates that this proud rebel should, at least, think of the possibility that the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) is on the path of piety. This contingency is enough to stop his rebellion.

Therefore, these verses do not contain the meaning that there is doubt about the invitation of the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* of people to guidance and piety, but they point out the above delicate case.

Some of the commentators think that the pronoun in the Arabic word / kāna/ or /amr/ refers to the one who prohibits, like Abū-Jahl. So, the verses mean that if he assumes the guidance and instead of prohibiting the saying of prayers, invites to piety, how beneficial it will be for himself!

Yet, the first commentary seems more appropriate.

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Explanation:

All the World is Before the Presence of Allah.

Taking this fact into consideration that all the deeds that Man does are in front of *Allah* and, for that matter, all the world is in front of Him, so that nothing of Man's deeds and thoughts is hidden from Him, this still has little effect on the routine of Man, in his whole life, or prevents him from doing wrong except when faith, in this fact, actually settles in his mind and establishes a certain belief in him.

There is a saying which goes: ***"Worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, He sees you."***

It is said that once a heedful believer, who had repented for his sin, was weeping. Someone asked him: ***"Why are you weeping? Do you not know that Allah, the Almighty, is forgiving?"***. He answered: ***"Yes, He might forgive, but how can I keep away the shame of that which He has seen from me?"*** .

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Sura 'Alaq
(The Clot)

No. 96 (verses 15-19)

١٥ كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ ○
١٦ نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ○
١٧ فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ ○
١٨ سَنَدْعُ الزَّبَانِيَةَ ○
١٩ كَلَّا لَا تُطِعْهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ ○ ۞

15. "Nay! If he desist not, We will certainly seize him by the forelock,"
16. "A lying, sinful forelock!"
17. "Then, let him call (for help) to his council (of comrades),"
18. "We will call on the angels of punishment (to deal with him)!"
19. "Nay! Heed him not; but prostrate yourself and draw nigh (to Allah)."۞

Commentary:

Prostrate Yourself and Draw Nigh (to Allah)!

The description of the previous verses is about the disbelieving rebels and their disgraceful treatment towards the holy Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* and those who pray. Now, in the following verses, these rebels are warned most violently. It says that it is not so as Abū-Jahl imagins. (He thinks that he can tread on the neck of the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) when he is prostrating himself and restrain him from doing this divine action):

"Nay! If he desist not, We will certainly seize him by the forelock."

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"A lying, sinful forelock!"

The term /la nasfa'an/ is based on / saf'/ which carries different meanings such as: '*laying hold upon, or seizing*; *to drag*; *to slap a man or his face with one's hand*; *to blacken the face*; *to make a mark upon something*', and '*to abase*' ; [1] the best choice being the first meaning, here, though there are also some other possibilities in the current verse. Therefore, the phrase / la nasfa'an bin-nāṣiyah / means: ' *We will assuredly take him by the forelock to the fire (of Hell)* ; or ' *We will assuredly lay hold upon his forelock and drag him thereby with violence to the fire* ' ; or ' *We will assuredly blacken his face* ', the / nāṣiyah / '*forelock*' being used for the face because it is the fore part, or ' *We will assuredly mark him with the mark of the people of the fire, making his face black, and his eyes blue*'; or ' *We will assuredly abase him or render him despicable* '.

In any event, the objective meaning that Abū-Jahl, or the likes of him, will be seized by his forelock and dragged on to the blazing fire, is that this happening occurs in the *Hereafter* or in this world or in both of them. Its witness is the narration cited in Tafsīr-i-Fakhr-i-Rāzī (vol. 32, p. 23).

The term / nāṣiyah / means '*forelock*', and '*its seizing*' is said for the case when a person is to be taken to something with humiliation, because when the forelock of a person is seized he can do nothing but submit to the circumstances.

The word / nāṣiyah /, of course, is used for both men and precious things. It is used in some other senses, too.

The words "*A lying, sinful forelock*" refer to a person with a forelock who was both a lier and sinful like Abū-Jahl.

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A narration from Ibn-Abbas denotes that once when the Messenger of Allah *(p.b.u.h.)* was praying around '*the standing place of Abraham (at Mecca)*' , Abū-Jahl went to him and told him that he had prohibited him from praying. The Holy Prophet loudly called at him and sent him away.

Abū-Jahl said: "*Do you call at me and send me away? Don't you know that the men in my tribe are more numerous of all others in these*

1 Fakhr-i-Rāzī, vol. 32, p. 23.

surroundings?". At this time the next verse was revealed, saying.

"Then, let him call (for help) to his council (of comrades),"

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"We will call on the angels of punishment (to deal with him)!"

It is then that the punishment of *Allah* encompasses him when this neglectful, arrogant Man will understand he can do nothing.

The term / nādī / is derived from / nidā / with the sense of '*call*' which means '*common meeting*', and sometimes it is used for an activity center, since, therein, the members usually '*call*' each other.

Some have said that it is based on the root /nidā/ with the sense of '*graciousness*', because they entertain each other there.

But, the purpose of using / nādī / , here , is to refer to the people who gather in that meeting, or, in other words, the people and comrades which persons like Abū-Jahl rely on for their power in their affairs.

The term / zabāniyah / is the plural form of / zibniyah / which originally means '*disciplinary guards*' , and, here, it appears to refer to '*the Angels who keep guard over Hell*'.

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In the last verse, of this Sura, (that is; the verse of compulsory prostration), it emphasizes that it is not as he imagins and persists on not bowing in adoration, it says:

"Nay! Heed him not, but prostrate yourself and draw nigh (to Allah)."۞

Those, such as Abū-Jahl, are naught to be able to stop 'you' from prostration, or to be a hinderance on the path of progress for 'your' religion. 'You' do cover the way by prostration and adoration to draw yourself closer to *Allah*.

By the way, it is understood from this verse that prostration causes Man to be close to *Allah* ; so a tradition from the Messenger of *Allah* says: *"The time when a servant of Allah is closest to Him is the time when he prostrates himself"*.

We know of course, that, according to the narrations of Ahlul-Bait, there are four obligatory prostrations in the verses of Qur'an. The Suras containing them are: **Sujdah, Fussila, al-Najm** and, here, **'Alaq**; the rest are only recommended prostrations.

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Explanation:

Rebellion and Self-Sufficiency.

Most corruptions and vices raise their ugly heads amongst rich and oppressive people who have always been at the head of the line against prophets. These poeple are the same ones who are mentioned in the Qur'an under the names of: / malaa / '***the leaders***', (**7:60**); or /mutrafīn/ '***wealthy ones***', (**34:34**); and sometimes / mustakbirīn / '***oppressors***', (**23:67**). The first refers to the rich whose outside appearances look valuable but, their real insides are empty; the second means the ones who enjoy the good things of this life and live in comfort and are completely proud, self-sufficing, and unaware of others' pain; and the third is applied to those who, talking nonsense about the Qur'an, insolently transgress the bounds of *Allah* and the rights of His servants.

The origin of them all is the imagination of being self-sufficient, the characteristic of those of low capacity who, when they obtain some blessings, wealth, tranquility or high position, feel self-sufficient and forget their Lord, quite neglectfully.

But, we know that the wealth of a person may disappear easily in a few minutes, or be wholly destroyed by a flood, an earthquake or lightning. One's health, too, is in danger by such a slight thing as drinking water.

What kind of negligence is it that dwells in some people to the point that they think they are self-sufficient, and transgress on others, proudly, in the society?

In order to remove this vice from himself, Man should think of his own weaknesses, on the one hand, and on the other hand, he should contemplate on the Great Power of *Allah*, and study the history of the destruction of arrogant people, of anicent generations, who were much stronger and more powerful than him.

He must learn humility: This is his defence.

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Supplication:

O Lord! Protect us against pride and arrogance; the main vices which cause us to be far from You.

O Lord! Please do not leave us alone, even for a moment.

O Lord! Please bestow on us such an ability that we valiantly overcome the oppressors who hinder our path, and make their evil plans fruitless.

The End

Sura 'Alaq

(The Clot)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Qadr (The Night of Honour)

No. 97 (5 Verses)

Contents of Sura Qadr:

As it is understood from the name of the Sura, it refers to the revelation of the Holy Qur'an on The Night of Honour and then, it describes the importance of the night and the Blessings thereon.

The chronological order of this Sura has no significance. Among the commentators it is known as a Meccan Sura, although some hold that it was revealed in Medina; as a narration denotes that the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) dreamed that the Ommayides were climbing his pulpit. This was disturbing to the Prophet, to have such a dream, and he disliked it. Then, **Sura Qadr** was revealed to comfort him. (Therefore, some believe that the verse: "***The Night of Honour is better than a thousand months***" refers to the length of time that the Ommayides governed, which was about one thousand months), and we know that Mosques and pulpits were established and formed in Medina, not Mecca. [1]

But, as it was said above, the Sura is known as Meccan and this narration may be a kind of application, not an occasion of revelation.

The Virtue of Studying this Sura:

On the virtue of studying this Sura, there is a narration from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) which says: "***He who recites it (Sura Qadr) will be rewarded like the one who has fasted the whole month of Ramadān and has kept vigil the night of Qadr, (The Night of Honour).***" [2]

Another narration from Imam Baqīr (*p.b.u.h.*) says: "*He who recites*

1 Rūh-al-Ma'ali, vol. 30, p. 188; and Durr-al-Manthūr, vol. 6, p. 391.

2 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 516.

Sura Qadr loudly and openly is like a person who fights in the Holy War on the path of Allah, and he who recites it hiddenly is like a person who swims in his own blood for the sake of Allah". [1]

It is obvious that these rewards are for he who recites the Sura and comprehends its real meaning, or they are for he who studies it, understands it and acts accordingly with regard to the Qur'an, and in his life obeys its verses.

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 30, p. 516.

Sura Qadr
(The Night of Honour)

No. 97 (verses 1-5)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ
١ إِنَّآ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِى لَيْلَةِ ٱلْقَدْرِ
٢ وَمَآ أَدْرَىٰكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ ٱلْقَدْرِ
٣ لَيْلَةُ ٱلْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ
٤ تَنَزَّلُ ٱلْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَٱلرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّن كُلِّ أَمْرٍ
٥ سَلَٰمٌ هِىَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ ٱلْفَجْرِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Surely, We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour,"

2. "And what makes you know what the Night of Honour is?"

3. "The Night of Honour is better than a thousand months."

4. "The Angels and the Spirit descend therein by their Lord's leave for every affair."

5. "Peace! It is till the rising of the dawn."

Commentary:

The Night When the Qur'an Was Revealed...

It is completely evident, in the verses of Qur'an, that the Holy Qur'an was revealed in Ramaḍān: "*Ramaḍān is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an...,*" (**Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verse 185**); and,

apparently, it seems that the whole Qur'an was descended in this month.

But, the first verse of Sura Qadr says:

"Surely We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour."

The word '***Qur'an***' is not clearly mentioned in this verse, but it is certain that the objective pronoun existing in the verse refers to the Qur'an and its seeming ambiquity is for stating its importance.

The phrase "***Surely We sent it***" is another sense to show the importance of this great heavenly Book of which *Allah* has attributed its descent to Himself especially with the plural pronoun, '***We***', which proves its greatness.

The descent of the Qur'an on the Night of Honour (Qadr), the very night on which the fates of men are decided, is another reason to show the importance of this great Divine Book in the destiny of men in this world.

With the combination of the senses of this verse and the above said verse from **Sura Baqarah**, it is concluded that the Night of Honour (Qadr) is in Ramaḍān. It is not clearly understood, from the Qur'an, which night of the nights of this month is the Night of Honour and has been left a mystery. But, there are many ideas about it in the narrations which will be dealt with later in this present Sura.

Here, a question arises regarding the history and the content of the Holy Qur'an in connection with the events in the life of the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) which evidently denote that this heavenly Book was sent down gradually and during the entire period of 23 years, then, how does this coincide with the above verse which says: "***Surely We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour***", and in Ramaḍān?

The reply to this question, as many scholars have said, is to say that the Qur'an has two kinds of revelation:

One kind is that the whole Qur'an came down, at once, in one night to the holy heart of the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) or to Bait-ul-Ma'mūr, or from the '***preserved tablet***' to the lowest heaven of this world.

The second kind of revelation is that the Holy Qur'an came down in portions, gradually, during the entire period of the Call which was twenty three years.

Some have also said that the beginning revelation of the Qur'an began on the Night of Honour; not the whole Book. But, the idea does

not fit with the apparent meaning of the verse which says: *"Surely We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour."*.

It is noteworthy that in some verses the descent of the Qur'an is used with the word /inzāl/ and in some others with the word /tanzīl/.

The difference between these two Arabic terms is that / inzāl / has a broad meaning and, here, it implies '*bringing down all at once*', while / tanzīl / implies '*bringing down gradually*'. This difference, which is seen in the verses of Qur'an, can be taken as an indication to the above two kinds of descent.

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In the next verses, referring to the greatness of the Night of Honour it says:

"And what makes you know what the Night of Honour is?"

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"The Night of Honour is better than a thousand months".

This sense shows that the importance of this night is so much so that even the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), with his vast knowledge, did not know it before the revelation of these verses.

We know that a '*thousand months*' is equal to more than eighty years. Truly, what a great night it is which values as much as the length of a fairly long blessed life.

It is cited in some commentaries that the holy Prophet has said: *"One of the members of the Israelites had spent one thousand months having his fighting dress on and being always prepared for the Holy War on the path of Allah."* The companions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) became surprised and wished that there might have been that sort of virtue and honour for them, too. Then, the above verse came down and said, *"The Night of Honour is better than a thousand months."* [1]

Another tradition denotes to what the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) had said about the four Israelites who had worshipped God for eighty years without offending His Limits and then his companions wished they would have had such a success, and the above verse was revealed in this

1 Durr-al-Manthūr, vol. 6, p. 371.

connection. [1]

Some have said that the figure '***a thousand***', mentioned in this verse, is for augmentation denoting that the value of the Night of Honour is more than thousands of months, but the above said narrations indicate that the figure is used in order to show the amount, and generally figures are used to show numbers except for the time when clear evidence for augmentation is available.

Then, describing the Night of Honour (Qadr) in details, it says:

"The Angels and the Spirit descend therein by their Lord's leave for every affair".

Regarding the term /tanazzala/ which is originally /tatanazzala/ and which is a future tense verb with the sense of continuity, makes it clear that the Night of Honour (Qadr) is not only for the period of the Call and the descent of the Qur'an, but it is a permanent fact and it is a night that repeats annually.

For the meaning of / rūh / '***spirit***' some have said that it refers to Gabriel, the trustworthy, who is also called / rūh-ul-amīn /, while some others have rendered / rūh / to mean '***inspiration***' in comparison with: ***"And thus have We, by Our Command, sent inspiration to thee...", (Sura Shūrā, No. 42, verse 52)***.

Therefore, the meaning of the verse becomes thus: ***'The Angels of Divine inspiration descend therein for every affair'.***

Here, there is a third commentary which seems the most appropriate of all. It says: ***'/ rūh / is an important creature greater than Angles'***. It is said in a tradition from Imam Sādiq ***(p.b.u.h.)*** that a person asked him whether 'Rūh' is the same as Gabriel and he replied: ***"Gabriel is one of the Angels and Rūh (Spirit) is greater than angels. Has Allah, the Exalted, not said: 'The Angels and Spirit descend'? ".*** [2]

This means that, in the sequence of comparison, those two are different. There are also other commentaries cited, here, on the word 'Rūh', but they do not have supporting reason, so we do not mention them, here.

The objective meaning of /min kull-i-amr/ '***for every affair***' is that

1 Durr-al-Manthūr, vol. 6, p. 371.

2 Tafsir-i-Borhān, vol. 4, p. 481.

the Angels descend to proportionate and assign the fates, and to bring any blessing and goodness on that night. The fulfillment of these actions is the purpose for their descent.

Or, they bring with them any good affair and any fate.

Furthermore, some have, also, said that the meaning is that they descend by the command of *Allah*. But, the very first meaning is more fitting.

The sense of /rabb-i-him/ '***their Lord***', of which the emphasis is on the subject of Lordship and assignment of the world, has a close agreement with the action of these angels, saying that they descend to proportionate and assign the affairs, and their accomplishment is a part of the Lordship of the Lord.

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And in the last verse of the Sura, it says:

"Peace! It is, till the rising of the dawn."

It is a night on which both the Qur'an has descended and worship and vigilance, therein, is equal to a thousand months. On this night, the divine blessings come down, and His special Grace covers the creatures, and the Angels and Spirit descend.

Thus, it is a night full of safety, from the beginning to the end, in which, according to some narrations, even Satan is fastened in chains, and from this point of view, that night is in security, too.

Therefore, the use of /salam/ '***peace***' which means safety (instead of safe) is, indeed, a kind of emphasis, here.

Some have also said that using /salam/ '***peace***' on that night is for the reason that on that night the Angels greet each other or greet the believers, or attend at the presence of the Prophet and his sinless substitutes (***p.b.u.th.***) and greet them.

To combine these commentaries is also possible.

In any case, it is a night with light, grace, mercy, blessing, goodness, spiritual safety and felicity that which is unique in any respect.

It is cited, in a tradition, that Imam Bāqir (***p.b.u.h.***) was asked if he knew which night the Night of Honour, Qadr, was and he replied: ***"How do we not know it whereas the angels go round us therein?"*** [1]

1 Borhān, Commentary, vol. 4, p. 488, tradition 29

In the story of Abraham (*a.s.*) we find that a few of the divine angels came to him and greeted him, (**Sura Hūd, No. 11, verse 69**), and gave him glad tidings of a son (Isaac). It is said that all this world was worthless in comparison with the delight that Abraham (*a.s.*) took in that greeting. Now, we may consider that the Night of Honour is one on which Angels come to the believers, in groups, and greet them. How delightful it is!

When Abraham was thrown into the fire which Nimrod ordered, for persecution, Angels came and greeted him and he remained safe. Does not the Fire of Hell, under the grace of Angel's greeting to the believers on the Night of Honour, become cool and a means of safety for the believers?

Yes, this is the sign of the importance of Mohammad's (*p.b.u.h.*) followers that, there, they appeared to Abraham (*a.s.*) like that and, here, to the believers of Islam.[1]

Explanation:

Which Affairs Are to be Fixed on the Night of Honour?

To answer this question of why this night is called the Night of Honour, a lot of ideas are stated, including the following:

(1) The night is called the Night of Honour because all the affairs and the destinies of men for a years' time are determined on that night. **Sura Dukhān, No. 44, verses 3-4** serve as witness to this idea, saying: ***"We sent it down during a night: For We (ever) wish to warn (against Evil)". "On that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom,".***

This meaning harmonizes with the numerous narrations that say: On that night the affairs and destinies of men are determined; sustenances, the end of lives and other affairs are made distinct and clear.

This matter, of course, does not contradict 'man's free-will' because Divine Wisdom is carried out by the angels based on men's efficiencies and abilities on the level of their Faith and virtue in purity of their intentions and actions.

That is, everyone is sustained with what he deserves, or in other

1 Tafsīr-i Fakhr-i-Rāzī, Commentary, vol. 32, p. 36.

words, the path is paved by the person, himself; and this not only does not contradict his 'free-will', but, also, emphasizes it.

(2) Some have also said that the night is called the '*Night of Honour*' because it is of great importance and honour, like the case that is stated in **Sura Hajj, No. 22, verse 74**: *"No just estimate have they made of Allah..."*.

(3) Some others have said that it is called the '*Night of Honour*' because the Holy Qur'an, with all its grand rank, was descended to the grand Apostle of *Allah* by the means of His grand angel.

(4) Or, it is a night on which the descent of the Qur'an is appointed.

(5) Or, the person who keeps vigil on that night obtains a grand rank.

(6) Or, one of the meanings of /qadr/ is '*restriction*' used in **Sura Talaq, No. 65, verse 7**: *"...and the man whose resources are restricted..."*, there descend so many angels on that night that the expanse of the Earth is restricted and does not have enough room for all of them.

The combination of all these commentaries on the vast meaning of the '*Night of Honour*' is quite possible, yet the first commentary is the most appropriate and common.

Which Night is the Night of Honour?

No doubt the Night of Honour is taken to be a night in the month of Ramaḍān since the combination of the verses of the Qur'an attests to this very fact. Once in **Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verse 185**, it says: *"Ramaḍān is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an..."*, and in the Sura under discussion it says: *"Surely We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Honour"*.

But, which night of the nights of Ramaḍān does it refer to? Commentators and literalists point to some particular night on the calendar, but there is no agreement as to which it is. The 1st, 17th, 19th, 21st, 23rd, 27th, or 29th night of Ramaḍān have all been suggested.

But, the most popular in the narrations is that it is in the last ten nights of the month, emphasizing on the 21st or 29th night. The evidence is referred to in a narration which says that the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) kept vigil and was busy praying all the nights of the last ten

nights of Ramaḍān.

A narration from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) denotes that the Night of Honour is the 21st or 23rd night of Ramaḍān, and when a man insisted and asked that if he could not worship on both of them, then, which one he would choose, he (*p.b.u.h.*) replied: ***"How easy is two nights for what you seek!"***. [1]

But, in numerous narrations, from Ahlul-Bait, the 23rd night is emphasized, while the narrations of Sunni scholars tend toward the 27th night.

Further, a narration from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) also says: ***"Determining the proportions is in the Night of Honour, the 19th night; its confirmation is on the 21st night, and its signing is on the 23rd night"***. [2] Thus, the senses of all narrations gather together.

However, a kind of mystic ambiquity covers the Night of Honour and the reason will be discussed later.

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Why is the Night of Honour a Mystery?

Many commentators believe that the Night of Honour, being hidden among the nights of the year or in the nights of Ramaḍān is for the reason that people consider all the nights as important, because *Allah* has hidden His pleasure in all kinds of obedience and worship so that people practice all of them, and He has hidden His wrath in sinning, in general, so that they avoid all kinds of sin. He has hidden His votaries among all members so that the whole people will be honoured. He has concealed the supplication to which He listens, among all supplications, and devotees refer to all of them when they call on Him. He has hidden /ismi-a'zam/, His Greatest Name, among His several universal names so that they will remember and consider all the divine names of the Lord. The time of their death is hidden so that they will always be prepared.

And this is a fitting philosophy.

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1 Nūr-ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 625, Tradition 58.

2 Nūr-ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 626, Tradition 62.

Was There the Night of Honour for Former Nations?

The verses of this Sura appparently show that the Night of Honour is not specialized to the time of the descent of the Qur'an and the period of the Call of the Messenger of Islam, but it repeats annually until the end of this world.

The application of the verb /tanazzala/, in the Sura, which is in the furture tense and indicates the continuity of the verb, and also using: ***"Peace! It is till the rising of the dawn"***, which is a noun phrase, shows perpetuality, both conform to this idea, too.

Besides, there are also many narrations which, perhaps, on the frequency of successive transmission attest to the idea.

Now, the question is that whether the old communities, too, had it or not.

Many narrations clearly indicate that this is of the divine blessings endowed to this group of people, Muslims. In a tradition, the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) is narrated to have said: ***"Surely Allah has bestowed on my community the Night of Honour which He did not give to any of those (peoples) who were before them".*** [1]

In commenting on the above verses there are some other narrations that indicate the same idea.

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How is the Night of Honour Better Than a Thousand Months?

Apparently, this night as being better than a thousand months is for the value of worshipping and keeping vigil on that night. The narrations on the virtue of the Night of Honour and the virtue of worship on it are abundantly mentioned in the books of both major groups of Muslims, Shi'ite and Sunnite, that certify this meaning.

Furthermore, the descent of the Qur'an on this Night and the descent of the divine blessings and Grace in it cause the night to be better than a thousand months.

A tradition says that Imam Sādiq (***p.b.u.h.***) told Ali - bin - abū - Ḥamzah - Thamāly: ***"Seek the virtue of the Night of Honour on the 21st and 23rd night and do say one hundred rak'at prayers on either of them and if you can, do keep vigil both nights till the break of dawn, and***

1 Durr-al-Manthūr, vol. 6, p. 371.

perform ritual bathing therein".

Abū-Hamzah says that he asked Imam Sādiq that if he could not pray so many prayers in the standing position, what should he do and he (*p.b.u.h.*) replied: *"Pray in the sitting position".* Again, he asked that if he could not do that, what should he do and he (*p.b.u.h.*) answered: ***"Pray in bed, and it does not matter if you sleep a little at the beginning of the night and then begin praying because, in Ramadān, the gates of Heaven are open, Satans are bound in chains and the deeds of the believers are accepted. What a good month Ramadān is!".*** [1]

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Why Was the Qur'an Descended on the Night of Honour?

Since, on the Night of Honour, the destiny of one year of ours is determined based on our worthiness, we should keep vigil the whole night and repent of our sins, practice self-perfection and refer to *Allah* to gain more and better worthiness for His mercy.

Yes, we should be aware of the moments that our fate forms and not spend the time in negligence and sleeping, otherwise our destiny will be regretful.

As the Qur'an is a book of destiny and leads to the path of happiness and guidance, for Man, it should be sent down on the Night of Honour, the night of determining fates. What a nice connection there is between 'the Qur'an' and the Night of Honour! And how meaningful their relation with each other is!

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Is the Night of Honour the Same Night in Different Zones?

We know that the beginning of the months is not the same in all parts of the world, that is, in one zone today is, for example, the first day of a month, but in another zone that very day is the second day of the month. Therefore, the Night of Honour cannot be a definite night in the year as, for instance, the 23rd of a month in Mecca may be the 22nd of that month in Iran, or Iraq, and, hence, each of them must, as a rule, have a Night of Honour for itself, separately.

Does this fact fit with the meaning understood from the verses

1 Nūr-ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 5. p. 626, part of tradition 58.

and the narrations that say the Night of Honour is a definite night?

Taking note of the following point, the answer to this question will be clear:

The words '***rotation***' and '***revolution***' mean nearly the same thing. But, in describing the Earth's movements, each word is used for a different kind of motion.

Revolution refers to the motion of the Earth in its yearly orbit around the Sun. Rotation refers to the spinning around of the Earth on its own axis every 24 hours in relation to the Sun. It is 24 hours from high noon on one day to high noon on the next. In its permanent rotation on its axis, half of the surface of the Earth is towards the sun. whereon it is day, and on the opposite part, at the same time, it is night.

The night, which is the shade of the Earth, itself, turns around in a complete circle for 24 hours all over the Earth. Therefore, the Night of Honour may be a night of a complete circle round the Earth; that is, during 24 hours, where darkness covers all the points of the Earth, itself, is the Night of Honour whose beginning starts from a point and it ends at another one.

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Supplication:

O Lord! Bestow on us such a wakefulness and acknowledgement that we take sufficient benefit from the virtue of the Night of Honour.

O Lord! We hope, only, that our predestined fates be determined based on Your Grace.

O Lord! Do not put us among those who are deprived from this month, because it is the worst deprivation.

The End

Sura Qadr

(The Night of Honour)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Bayyinah (The Clear Evidence)

No. 98 (8 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

The contents of the Sura attests to the fact that it was revealed in Medina, because, the People (Jews and Christians) of the Book (The Scripture) are repeatedly talked about, and we know that at the time of revelation the communication between the Muslims and the People of the Book occured mostly in Medina.

Furthermore, the words of the Sura are both about prayers and alms. It is true that the duty of paying the alms-tax was issued in Mecca, but the act of spreading this idea with the necessary formalities, was extended in Medina.

In any case, this Sura refers to the universal message of our holy Prophet (*p. b.u.h.*) in the same line of prophecy that the Jews and Christians received their scriptures. They should have prepared themselves for the Advent of the greatest and last of the prophets, but when the awaited Prophet, whom they were waiting for, came with clear signs and evidences, they rejected him, because they were not really searching for truth; they only followed their own desires to gain worldly profits.

By the way, this Sura shows the fact that the doctrine of the prophets such as Faith, monotheism, prayers and fasting are eternal and unchangeable principles in all Divine religions.

In another part of the Sura the different reactions of the pagans and the People of the Book, regarding the invitation to Islam, are referred to, saying that those who believe and do righteous deeds are

the best of all creatures, and those who disbelieve and refuse to worship Him are certainly the worst of all creatures.

The most popular titles of this Sura are: '**Bayyinah**', '**Lam Yakun**' and '**Ghayyimah**' ; titles which come from the text, itself.

The Virtue in Studying Sura Bayyinah:

On the virtue in reciting this Sura, there is a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) who has said: "*If people knew how blessful this Sura is (Bayyinah), they would leave their property and family to learn it.*" .

Someone from the ' Khazā'ih ' people asked: "*O Messenger of Allah! What is the reward for reciting it?*" .

He answered: "*Neither a hypocrite nor those in whose hearts contain doubt about Allah recite it. By Allah, the near-stationed angels have been reciting it from the time the heavens and the earth were created and do not languish in its recitation. There will be no servant who recites it at night but that Allah sends angels who protect him in his Faith and his present life and that seek forgiveness and mercy for him; and when on the day he recites it, he will be rewarded as much as what the day sheds light upon and what the night darkens.*" . [1]

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 521.

Sura Bayyinah
(The Clear Evidence)

No. 98 (verses 1-5)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ لَمْ يَكُنِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ وَٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنفَكِّينَ
حَتَّىٰ تَأْتِيَهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَةُ

٢ رَسُولٌ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ يَتْلُواْ صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً

٣ فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ

٤ وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ إِلَّا مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَةُ

٥ وَمَآ أُمِرُوٓاْ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ
حُنَفَآءَ وَيُقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُواْ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَذَٰلِكَ دِينُ ٱلْقَيِّمَةِ

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Sura Bayyinah
(The Clear Evidence)

No. 98 (verses 1-5)

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Those who reject (Truth) from among the People of the Book and the polytheists were not going to depart (from their ways) until there should come to them Clear Evidence,"

2. "A Messenger from Allah, reciting pure scriptures;"

3. "Wherein are laws right and straight."

4. "Nor were those divided who were given the Book, except after the Clear Evidence had come to them."

5. "And they were ordered no more than that they should worship Allah (alone) being sincere to Him in obedience, upright, to keep up prayer, and pay zakat (poor-rate) and that is the religion right and straight."

Commentary:

The Religion Right and Straight.

At the beginning of the Sura the situation before Islam, the People of the Book and the pagan Arabs, is referred to. It says:

"Those who reject (Truth) from among the People of the Book and the polytheists were not going to depart (from their ways) until there should come to them the Clear Evidence,"

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"A Messenger from Allah, reciting pure scriptures;"

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"Wherein are laws right and straight."

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Yes, they said that they were convinced of the coming of the Prophet of Islam (*p.b.u.h.*), but later when his heavenly Book was revealed the circumstances changed and they differed in their ideas

about the religion of *Allah*. It says:

"Nor were these divided who were given the Book, except after the Clear Evidence had come to them."

Thus, the aforemetioned verses reveal that the claim of the People of the Book and the disbelievers was that they insisted on a prophet having clear evidences to accept. But, when the clear evidence, Islam, and the awaited prophet, in the person of Mohammad (*p.b.u.h.*) arrived, they rejected the religion of Islam and resisted the Prophet except for a minority of them:

The preceding verse is similar to the content of **Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verse 89** which says: ***"And when there comes to them a Book from Allah, confirming what is with them, although from of old they had prayed for victory against those without Faith, when there comes to that which they (should) have recognized, they refuse to believe in it, but the curse of Allah is on those without Faith."***

We know that the People of the Book expected such an Advent and, too, the Pagan Arabs, who knowing the People of the Book to be more learned than themselves, customarily followed the same idea and adopted it as their own, but after reaching their goals they changed the way and joined the opponents.

A group of commentators have another idea on the contents of these verses. They say that the objective meaning is that the mentioned people, not simply by mere claim, but, in actuality, did not leave their old belief until they had clear evidences.

This statement means that after having such clear evidences they accepted the Prophet, but this contrasts with the following verses which indicate that they did not. Or, it may be said that the objective meaning is that some of them believed, though they were in the minority.

But, this idea seems improbable and, perhaps, it was for the same reason that Fakhr-i-Rāzī in his commentary considered the first verse, which to him is in contrast with the next verse, one of the most complicated verses of the Qur'an, and, then, in order to solve the problem he gave some explanations, the best of which is the very one that we have mentioned above.

A third commentary exists which says that the objective meaning is that *Allah* does not leave the People of the Book and disbelievers to

themselves unless He completes the argument; sends them an evidence, and shows them the straight way. For this reason He sent the Messenger of Islam to guide them.

In fact, this verse is a reference to '***the principle of favor***' which is discussed in '***speculative theology***' and states that *Allah* sends clear evidences for every sect to complete the argument.

In any case, the meaning of /bayyinah/, here, is '***Clear Evidence***' and whose example, according to the second verse, is the Messenger of *Allah* (***p.b.u.h.***), himself, who had at his disposal the Holy Qur'an for his teachings.

The term /ṣuḥuf/ is a plural form of /ṣaḥīfah/ which means '***a leaf or page of a book***', or '***some leaves of paper on which something is written***' and, here, it means '***the contents of them***', because we know that the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) could not read anything from the pages and, therefore, was teaching the '***contents***' of them.

And the purpose of using the term /muṭahharah/ is that it was exactly the very truth, the original Word of *Allah*, in its purity, without corruption having polluted it, and far from the evil hands of Jinn and the human race; as is mentioned in **Sura Fussilat, No. 41, verse 42**: "***No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it...***"

Now, Verse 3 "***Wherein are laws...***" refers to the fact that, in these scriptures, there are, without doubt, decrees contained therein that are right and straight.

Therefore, /kutub/, here, means '***what is written***', or it means '***the laws or decrees appointed by Allah***', because /kitābat/, in Arabic, has been used in the sense of 'prescribing a decree' as in **Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verse 183**: "***O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may learn self-restraint.***"

Then, the term /qayyimah/ means '***smooth, straight, right, strong, confirmed, valuable, worthy***' or all these meanings collectively.

It is also probable that since the Qur'an contains all that the former scriptures had, besides many other additional points, then, it is said that therein are the right ordinances of the past.

It is worthy to note that in the first verse '***the People of the Book***' is mentioned prior to '***the polytheists***' but, in the fourth verse only '***the People of the Book***' is mentioned and while '***polytheists***' is not stated, the

verse refers to both of them.

Apparently, these differences may be for that, in this matter, the People of the Book were the main rejectors and the polytheists were their dependants; or for that the People of the Book deserved more blame, because they had many men of knowledge among them and had a higher standard of theology than the polytheists so, therefore, their rejection was more disgraceful and blameworthy.

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Then, the Qur'an reproaches 'The People of the Book' and the polytheists saying:

"And they were ordered no more than that they should worship Allah (alone) being sincere to Him in obedience, upright, and to keep up prayer, and pay zakat (poor-rate) and that is the religion right and straight."

On the phrase /wa mā umirū/ ***"and they were ordered no more"***, some have cited that the purpose of using this phrase is that the People of the Book already had the three eternal principles in their own religion: Unity of God, prayer, and alms. These are some fixed principles, but those people were not true to their promise concerning these principles.

Furthermore, the same decrees, in Islam, are, also, pure monotheism, prayer and alms which are the same eternal principles. So, why did they refuse to accept them?

Using this phrase, then, seems more suitable, because, /umirū/ '***ordered***', refers to the acceptance of the new religion, that which was mentioned in the preceding verse, over which '***they divided***'.

Some of the commentators believe that using the word /dīn/ '***religion***', here, means '***worship***' and the phrase '***no more than that they should worship Allah (alone)***', confirms this idea.

The term / ḥunafā / is the plural form of / ḥanīf / derived from /ḥanaf/ '***pure in faith***' and as ***Rāqib*** cites in ***Mufradāt*** it means '***to decline from aberration to the straight way***'. All those who make pilgrimage to Kaaba or were circumcised were called / ḥanīf /, by the Arabs, referring to the fact that they had believed in Abraham's religion.

On the whole, this word in lexicology and in various dictionaries originally means '***crookedness or inclination***', but, in the Qur'an and

Islamic traditions it has been used with the sense of '***declining from polytheism and inclining toward monotheism and the straight way***'.

The phrase '***the religion right and straight***' denotes that those principles, i.e., pure montheism, prayers and alms, are eternal and unchangeable in all religions, or it can be said that they are found within the nature of all human beings.

So, the destiny of Man leads him to monotheism and his nature invites him to being grateful to his Lord, knowing His divine essence, and, further, Man's social spirit calls him to the service of the deprived by practicing deeds of charity.

Therefore, the root of these characteristics, in general, exists in all humans and that is why these laws are also found in the teachings of all the former prophets and are the core in the teachings of the Prophet of Islam, Mohammad (***p.b.u.h.***).

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Sura Bayyinah
(The Clear Evidence)

No. 98 (verses 6-8)

٦ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ وَٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ فِى نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ
خَـٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ ۚ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ ٱلْبَرِيَّةِ
٧ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّـٰلِحَـٰتِ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ ٱلْبَرِيَّةِ
٨ جَزَآؤُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّـٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِى مِن
تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَـٰرُ خَـٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ۖ رَّضِىَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا۟ عَنْهُ
ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِىَ رَبَّهُۥ

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Sura Bayyinah
(The Clear Evidence)

No. 98 (verses 6-8)

6. "Surely those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book and the polytheists shall be in the fire of Hell, therein dwelling forever; they are the worst of all creatures."

7. "Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creatures."

8. "Their reward with their Lord will be Gardens of eternity, beneath which rivers flow, therein dwelling forever; Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him. That is for him who fears his Lord and Cherisher."

Commentary:

The Best and the Worst Creatures.

In the former verses, it was mentioned that the people of the Book and the polytheists were waiting for clear evidence to be sent by Allah, but when it came they were dispersed and everyone went his separate way.

In the following verses, from the point of Faith in truth, people are divided into two groups; believers and disbelievers, and then the fate of each is pointed out.

At first it says:

"Surely those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book and the polytheists shall be in the fire of Hell, therein dwelling forever, they are the worst of all creatures."

The term / kafarū / *'they disbelieved'*, here, refers to their blasphemy rather than their being Muslim, otherwise their previous infidelity was not a new matter.

The phrase "***they are the worst of all creatures***" is a startling statement which shows that among all the living and non-living creatures

there is nothing worse than those who left the right path and went astray after the truth became clear and the argument and reason became complete. This is, in fact, like that which is mentioned in **Sura Anfal, No. 8, verse 22**: *"For the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb. Those who understand not."*. Or similar still, to what **Sura A'raf, No. 7, verse 179** says after referring to the people of Hell with the same characteristics: *"...they are like cattle, nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning)."*.

There is also a point in the current verse which goes beyond these matters, because it introduces them as "*the worst of all creatures*", and this is, indeed, a statement of evidence for their perpetual stay in the fire of Hell.

And why not! They were the worst of all creatures, because all the means of salvation were being prepared for them, but they refused it, intentionally, due to their pride, deceit and enmity.

In this verse, again, the phrase '*The People of Book*' is mentioned prior to '*polytheists*' perhaps for the reason that they had heavenly Books and learned men among them and also possessed some signs and information about the Prophet of Islam which were clearly mentioned in their Books. Therefore, their rejection was more hideous and indecent.

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In the next verse, the contrasting group, who are in a higher position, are referred to. It says:

"Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creatures."

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Then their rewards are pointed out:

"Their rewards with their Lord will be Gardens of eternity, beneath which rivers flow, therein dwelling forever; Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him. That is for him who fears his Lord and Cherisher".

This high rank and the splendid, unparalleled rewards are for the one who fears his Lord: *"That is for him who fears his Lord and Cherisher".*

It is worthy to note that when speaking about the righteous, it also mentions '*doing good deeds*', which is, in fact, the fruit of Faith, and

indicates that a mere claim of Faith is not enough, Man's conduct should adapt to this Faith, too. But, blasphemy, itself, even with the lack of evil action, causes aberration in Man, and this is apart from the fact that blasphemy is usually the source of many kinds of sin, crimes, and wrong actions.

The phrase: "***they are the best of all creatures***" clearly shows that good believing people who do righteous deeds are even higher than the angels, because the verse is general and there is no exception made in it. There are other verses, also, that are witness to this idea like the verses concerning the prostration of the angels to Adam, and the verse: "***We have honoured the sons of Adam...***", (**Sura Banī Isrā'īl, No. 17, verse 70**).

However, in this verse, the material and physical rewards of the righteous; gardens full of different blessings in Heaven, are mentioned first, and, then, their spiritual reward is referred to, that is; "***...Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him***".

They are well-pleased with *Allah* because whatever they have asked of Him, He has given them and if they erred He forgave them by *His* Grace. What pleasure can be better or higher than that one feels that his beloved, his Lord, accepts him and is pleased with him and he succeeds to be close to Him.

Yes, the Paradise, for Man's body, is the eternal Gardens of the next world, but the Paradise for his soul is the Lord's pleasure.

The sentence: "***That is for him who fears his Lord and Cherisher***" shows that all these gifts come into being because of the existence of the '***fear of Allah***' since it is the motive of all obedience, piety, and righteous deeds.

It should also be noted that the '***fear of Allah***' is the fear to offend His holy Law, the fear to do anything which is against His holy Will. Such fear is akin to love; for with it dawns the consciousness of *Allah's* loving care for all His creatures.

Some of the commentators have combined this verse with Sura **Fāṭir, No. 35, verse 28**: "***...those truly fear Allah among His servants, who have knowledge...***", and have concluded that Paradise is, in fact, the incontestable right of the scientists and learned people.

Of course, regarding the fact that the '***fear of Allah***' has stages and degrees, as well as knowledge, which has hierarchies, too, the meaning

of this statement is clear.

By the way, some believe that the position of /xašiyat/ is higher than that of /xauf/ because the latter is used for any fear, but the former is a kind of fear mixed with exaltation and respect.

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Explanation:

Hazrat Ali (p.b.u.h.) and His Followers Are 'the best creatures'.

There are a great many narrations quoted by famous Sunnite and Shi'ite sources in which the verse: "***...They are the best of all creatures***" is rendered to mean Hazrat Ali (***p.b.u.h.***) and his followers.

Hākim Haskānī Neyshābūrī, one of the famous Sunnite scholars, in the fifth century A.H., has cited some narrations with different references whose number is more than twenty in his well-known book ***Shawāhid-ut-Tanzīl***. The following are some examples:

1. Ibn-Abbas says that when the verse: "***Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creatures***" was revealed, the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) told Hazrat Ali (***a.s.***): "***It is you and your followers who will come on the Day of Reckoning when you and your followers are well-pleased (yourselves) and well-pleasing Him and your enemy will come angrily pushed (into Hell)***". [1]

2. Abū Barazah has narrated a tradition from the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) who recited the verse and said: "***They are you and your followers. O' Ali! The appointment for you and me is (beside) the Pool of Abundance***" [2] ('Haud' is the pool of 'Kauthar').

3. Jābir - ibn - 'Abdillāh - Anṣārī narrates in another tradition that they were sitting with the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) in the Sacred House when Ali (***a.s.***) came to them. As soon as the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) saw him, he said: "***My brother is coming to you***". Then, he turned toward the Ka'ba and said: "***By the Lord of this Structure! Surely this man and his followers will be triumphant on the Day of Judgement***". Then, he addressed them and added: "***By Allah! Truly he was formost to all of you in believing in Allah; and among you all he is the most correct in obeying Allah; the most faithful in fulfilling the covenant of Allah; the hardest to the***

1 Shawāhid-ut-Tanzīl, vol. 2, p. 357, tradition 1126.

2 Shawāhid-ut-Tanzīl, vol. 2, p. 359, tradition 1130.

decree of Allah, the best distributer of the (treasury) in equality, the justest to the citizens, and the most important in position with Allah".

Jābir said it was then that *Allah* sent down the verse: "*Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creatures*", and from then on whenever Ali came, the Helpers of the Prophet would say: "*The best of all creatures next to the Messenger of Allah came*". [1]

The descent of this verse, in Mecca, does not contrast with the idea that the Sura is Medinan, because it might have been revealed, again, there. Further, the descent of this verse might have happened on one of the holy Prophet's trips from Medina to Mecca, in particular that the reporter of the narration is 'Jābir - ibn - 'Abdillāh - Anṣārī' who joined the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) in Medina. Then, terming these kinds of verses 'Medinan' is not improbable.

Some of these traditions are cited by 'Ibn-Ḥijr' in 'Ṣawā'iq' and some others by 'Mohammad Shablanjī' in 'Nūr-ul-Abṣār'. [2]

A great part of the last narration is narrated from Ibn - 'Asākir, from Jābir-ibn-'Abdillāh by Jalāl-id-Din-Suyūtī in Durr-ul-Manthūr.

4. It is narrated from Ibn-'Abbas in Durr-ul-Manthūr that when the verse: "*Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creatures*" was revealed the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) told Ali: "*It is you and your followers who, on the Day of Reckoning are well-pleased (yourselves) and well-pleasing (Him).*" [3]

5. In another tradition, the above mentioned person narrates from Ibn - Mardūyah from Hazrat Ali (*a.s.*) that the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) had told him (Ali): "*Have you not heard the word of Allah: 'Surely those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of all creatures'? You and your followers are those and the appointment place of mine and yours will be at the Pool of Abundance'. When I come for the account of nations you will be invited in the case that your foreheads are white (to be known)*". [4]

Many other Sunnite scholars have also cited the same meaning in

1 Shawāhid-ut-Tanzīl, vol. 2, p. 362, tradition 1139.

2 al-Sawā'iq-ul-Muḥarraqah, p. 96, and Nūr-ul-Abṣār, p. 70, 101.

3 Durr-ul-Manthūr, vol. 6, p. 379.

4 Ibid.

their works including: Khaṭīb Khārazmī in 'Manāqib', Abū-Na'īm Isfahānī in 'Kifāyat - ul - Khiṣām', 'Allāmah Tabarī in his famous commentary 'Tabarī', Ibn-Ṣabbāq Mālikī in 'Fuṣūl - ul - Muhimmah', 'Allāmah Shoukānī in 'Fatḥ - ul - Qadīr', Shaykh Sulaymān Qandūzī in 'Yanābī' - ul - Mawwadah', Ālūsī in 'Rūh - ul - Ma'ānī', and some others.

In conclusion, the above mentioned tradition is one of the famous traditions that is accepted by a great many scholars of Islam. And this, in itself, is an important, matchless excellence for Hazrat Ali (*a.s.*) and his followers.

By the way, this narration makes this fact clear that the term '*Shi'ah*' was applied and was spread among Muslims by the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), himself, at that time, and it refers to the particular followers of Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (*p.b.u.h.*)

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The Necessity of Intention in Adorations.

Some of the scholars of the principles of Islamic Jurisprudence have taken the verse: ***"And they were ordered no more than that they should worship Allah (alone) being sincere to Him in obedience..."*** as an evidence for (niyyat) '***intention***' with divine motive being necessary in 'worship' and this depends on the word 'dīn', here, to be meant 'worship' so that it becomes a reason for the necessity of sincerity in worship. We should also take the term /amr/, ***'command'*** in this verse, unlimited in order to have a sense of necessity of intention with divine motive in all commands. However, the meaning of the verse does not seem to be either of them, but the purpose of the verse is to prove monotheism in contrast with polytheism. It means they are only invited to monotheism.

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The Wonderful Heights and Depths to Which Man Can Reach.

We understand, clearly, from the verses of this Sura that there is no creature in the world like Man to be able to gain the highest ranks and being the best of all by doing righteous deeds, (note that '***righteous deeds***' includes all good deeds; not only a part of them), and if he goes on the path of blasphemy and aberration he will fall so deep that he can be the worst of all creatures.

The vast, great distance between these two extremes of highness and lowliness of Man; although a very sensitive and dangerous status for him, indicates his dignity and capability of development. It is natural that Man, with such an efficiency and extraordinary potentiality, is also quite close to the possibility of extraordinary aberration.

Supplication:

O Lord! We look to You, Your Grace, to gain the high rank of "the best of all creatures".

O Lord! Count us among the followers of the man who deserves this title the best.

O Lord! Endow us with such a sincerity that we worship and love nothing but You.

The End

Sura Bayyinah
(The Clear Evidence)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Zilzāl (The Quaking)

No. 99 (8 Verses)

Contents of Sura Zilzāl:

Opinions are divided as to whether this Sura was revealed in Mecca or Medina. It is generally referred to as being of the early Medinan period, by some commentators, while some others believe that it can be of the late Meccan period. The style of its verses, which are about Resurrection and the preliminary signs of its occurence, appears to be like the Meccan Suras, but there is a tradition which says that when this Sura was revealed, Abū-Sa'īd-Khedrī asked the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) a question about the following verse: "***So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it***", and we know that Abū-Sa'īd joined the Muslims in Medina. [1]

In any case, whether it is Meccan or Medinan, it does not change the meaning and the commentary of the Sura.

This Sura mainly pivots on three points: First, it speaks about the preliminary signs of the appearance of the Hereafter, and then, it tells us about the Earth as a witness to all of Man's deeds.

In the third part, people are divided into two groups; good and evil, each of which will receive the fruit of their own actions.

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1 Rūh-al-Ma'ānī, vol. 30, p. 208.

The Virtue in Studying this Sura:

There are some expressive meanings in the Islamic reports on the virtue of reciting this Sura. For instance, a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) says: *"He who recites it (Sura Zilzāl), it is the same as if he had recited Sura Baqarah, his reward is as much as the one who would have recited one fourth of the Qur'an."* [1]

Another tradition from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) says: *"Be never tired of reciting it (Sura Zilzāl),* because everyone who recites it in his optional prayers will never be involved in an earthquake and he will not die by it, nor should he be hurt by lightning or any worldly pests until he dies". [2]

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 524.

2 Usūl-Kāfī as narrated in Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 347.

Sura Zilzāl
(The Quaking)

No. 99 (verses 1-8)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا

٢ وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا

٣ وَقَالَ الْإِنسٰنُ مَالَهَا

٤ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا

٥ بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحٰى لَهَا

٦ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمٰلَهُمْ

٧ فَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ

٨ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

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Sura Zilzāl
(The Quaking)

No. 99 (verses 1-8)

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. *"When the Earth shall quake with a mighty quaking,"*
2. *"And the Earth shall cast forth her burdens,"*
3. *"And man shall say (distressed): What has befallen her?"*
4. *"On That Day, she will recount (all) her news:"*
5. *"For that your Lord will have given her inspiration."*
6. *"On That Day, people shall come forth in groups to be shown their deeds."*
7. *"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it."*
8. *"And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it."*

Commentary:

The Day When Man Sees All His Deeds.

As it was pointed out about the contents of the Sura, the beginning of the Sura refers to the horrible end of the phenomenal world and some terrible signs it has before the Resurrection befalls.

At first, it says:

"When the Earth shall quake with a mighty quaking,"

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"And the Earth shall cast forth her burdens,"

The term / zilzālahā / '*her earthquake*' points either to the idea that, on that day, all the globe will quake (this is different from the ordinary earthquakes that we know of which are local and periodical), or to the promised earthquake, that is, the final earthquake of the Resurrection.

Commentators have delivered different ideas on the term /aθqāl/

'*burdens*'. Some have said that the purpose of using it is to signify men who will be thrown out from their graves by the quake of the Resurrection, like that which is found in **Sura Inshiqāq, No. 84, verse 4** which says: "*And casts forth what is within it and becomes empty*".

Some others have said the purpose is that it casts out the minerals and treasures from within the earth which causes the mammonists to sigh for them.

It is also probable that it means some enormous boulders and lava, from beneath the crust of the earth, which are usually thrown up when earthquakes and volcanoes occur. At the end of this world and through the great and final convulsion, whatever is inside the earth will be thrown out.

The first commentary seems more appropriate, though all of them can be combined, as well.

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However, on That Day everyone, observing that supreme world-shaking Event, will become completely terrified:

"*And man shall say (distressed): What had befallen her?*"

Some have rendered '*man*', here, to mean the unbelieving men, in particular, who had doubt about the Resurrection. But, it seems that the word '*man*' has a vast meaning, here, so that it includes all human beings, because the situation of the earth, on That Day, will be so surprising that everyone will wonder, so it is not limited to the unbelievers, alone.

Does this surprise and question thereby depend on whether it is the First or the Second Blast?

The circumstances will show that it is the First Blast, of the end of this world, because the Great world-shaking Event happens at that time.

However, it has been presumed that it refers to the Second Blast and the raising of the dead when all people come out from beneath the earth. The later verses are all about the Second Blast, too.

But, since the events of these two blasts are frequently seen together, in the verses of Qur'an, the first commentary, regarding the terrible final earthquake, seems more fitting. If so, the use of the term /aθqāl/ '*burdens*' is in reference to minerals, treasures and moulten lava hidden in the earth.

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More important than this is that:

"On That Day, she will recount (all) her news".

On the Day of Judgement, the earth will manifest all good and evil deeds that were carried out on it. This very earth, on which we live and do our actions, is one of the greatest witnesses to Man's deeds on That Day.

There is a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) who asked: *"Do you know what the purpose of 'her news' is?"* The people replied that *Allah* and His Messenger are more informed. Then, he added: *" 'Her news' is that she is witness to all the deeds that every servant has done on her surface. She will say: So and so had done such and such on a particular day. And this is 'her news' ".* [1]

In another tradition the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) is narrated to have said: *"Be careful of your ablution; and the best action of your deeds is prayer. Then, protect the earth, because she is your mother; and there is no one on her who does good or evil, but that she reports it.".* [2]

Abū-Sa'īd-Khedrī has narrated that when they were in the desert they would call to prayer, loudly, because he had heard from the Messenger of Allah (*p.b.u.h.*) who said: *"There is no Jinn or human or stone that hears it, but does not bear witness to it (on the Day of Judgement)."* [3]

Does the Earth really speak by the command of *Allah* ? Or, is the purpose that the effects of Man's deeds appear on the face of the earth?

We know that every action which Man does has an effect on his surroundings even though they are not tangible for us, but they all will be made manifest on That Day and the Earth speaking is not anything save one example of this great manifestation.

In any event, this is not a strange matter because, even today with the development of science and Man's experiments, there are inventions that can record the voice of people or take photos and films of the

1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 649.

2 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 526.

3 Ibid.

actions that anyone does, at any time or anywhere and which can be kept as proper documents to be offered to the court in a form that no one can deny or reject.

It is worthy to note that Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) is narrated to have said: *"Say your prayers at different points in the Mosques, because on the Day of Judgement evey part will bear witness for the one who has prayed thereon."*. [1]

Another tradition denotes that when Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) finished the act of dividing the public treasury of the Muslims, he used to say a two-rak'at prayer and then said (addressing the place): *"On the Day of Judgement bear witness for me that verily I filled you justly and emptied you rightfully."*. [2]

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In the next verse, it says:

"For that your Lord will have given her inspiration."

And the Earth obeys this command fully. The term /auḥā/ is used, here, to indicate the extent of the divine revelation and that even the earth shall have some sort of receiving the revelation by which she will be able to speak or it is contrary to the nature of the earth to speak.

Some have said that the purpose is that He inspires the Earth to cast out what she has written, herself.

But, the first commentary seems more correct and more appropriate.

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Then, it says:

"On That Day, people shall come forth in groups to be shown their deeds".

The term / aštāt / is the plural form of /šatt/ with the meaning of '*scattered fragments*', the separation and diversity of people may be for that on the Day of Judgement the followers of different religions will arrive separately; or the people of every part of the earth will come by themselves; or some people will appear with beautiful, happy faces and some others with dark, frowning, dull faces.

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1 Li'āl-il-Akhbār, vol. 5, p. 79 (New edition).

2 Ibid.

Or, all sects are with their leaders as is pointed out in **Sura Asrā, No. 17, verse 71**: *"One day We shall call together all human beings with their (respective) Imams..."*.

Or, the believers with the believers and the disbelievers with the disbelievers will come forth on the Day of Judgement.

To combine these commentaries, together, is also quite possible, because the meaning of the verse is vast.

The term / yāṣdur / is derived from / ṣādr / and means '*camels excitingly coming out of the watering place, in groups*', and, here, it refers to '*different sects coming out of their graves for thier reckonings*'.

The purpose of the phrase /liyarau-a'mālahum/ '*to be shown their deeds*' is that they will see the outcome of their deeds.

Or, they will see the record of the deeds in which every action, good or bad, is recorded.

Or, it refers to the esoteric observation with the sense of knowing the quality of their deeds.

Or, it means the embodiment of deeds and observing the deeds, themselves.

The last commentary adapts to the appearance of the verse most of all. This verse is considered the most clear, among the verses, on the matter of '*the embodimem of deeds*' which on That Day men's deeds are incarnated in their forms and appear in front of every individual. This correlation with deeds causes Man to be joyful or afflicted according to the various levels of his merits and demerits.

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Then, the fate of these two groups, believers and disbelievers, good-doers and evildoers, are pointed out, saying:

"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it"

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"And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it."

Again, there are different commentaries cited as to whether the person shall see the outcome of his deeds or whether he shall see the record of the deeds or the deeds, themselves.

The appearance of these verses emphasizes, again, on the

embodiment of deeds and seeing the deeds, themsleves, good or evil, on the Day of Judgement even for the slightest one.

The term / miθqāl / means both '***weight, heaviness***' and '***a scale***' by which the weight of things are weighed, and, here, the first meaning is used.

Commentators have rendered the word /ðarrah/ differently, such as: '***a small ant***', '***the dust that sticks on the hand when one puts it on the ground***'; or particles of dust floating in the air that are seen when a beam of sunlight shines through an opening into a dark room.

We know that, nowadays, the word /ðarrah/ is also used in the Arabic language for '***atom***' and '***atomic bomb***' is called /qunbulatun ðarriyah/. Furthermore, an atom is a tiny particle of anything; or any of the smallest particles of an element that combine with similar particles of other elements to produce compounds: Atoms combine to form molecules and consist of a complex arrangement of electrons revolving around a positively charged nucleus containing (except for hydrogen) protons and neutrons and other particles.

In any case, whatever it means, the purpose, here, is the smallest weight.

However, this verse is one of the verses that shakes Man and shows that the account of *Allah*, on That Day, is extraordinarily proper and sensitive, and the scales for weighing Man's deeds are so delicate and just that they count the smallest weight of his actions.

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Explanation:

Accuracy and Severity at the Divine Reckoning.

Not only the verses of this Sura, but, also different verses of the Qur'an clearly show that on the Day of Judgement the Reckoning is extremely precise. **Sura Luqmān, No. 31, verse 16** says: ***"O my son!" (said Luqmān), "If there be (but) the weight of a mustard seed and it were (hidden) in a rock, or (anywhere) in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: For Allah understands the finest mysteries, (and) is well acquainted (with them)."***

Mustard is a small seed from a famous plant and it is proverbially a small, minute thing that people may ordinarily pass by.

These senses warn Man of the strictness which he will be dealt

with in accounting for his deeds. Even the smallest deed, good or evil. will not escape the accounting. By the way, these verses warn us not to think that lesser sins are unimportant nor the good actions, insignificant. Whatever *Allah* counts cannot be considered unimportant.

That is why some commentators have said that these verses were revealed when some of the followers of the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) were heedless of little acts of charity and used to say that the reward is given for the things which we like and little things are not among those that we like. They were heedless of the lesser sins, too. These verses were revealed and encouraged them to do even the little acts of charity and to admonish them about small vices.

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An Answer To A Question.

A question arises, here, as to whether, according to these verses, Man will see all his deeds, good or evil, small or great on the Day of Judgement. How does this idea adapt with the verses about the good deeds canceling the bad ones (or vice-versa), excommunication, forgiveness, and repentance? The verses of cancellation say that some actions and beliefs like blasphemy destroy all the good actions of Man, for example: **Sura Zumar, No. 39, verse 65** says: "***...If you were to join (gods with God), truly fruitless will be thy work (in life)...***". And based on the verses of excommunication, sometimes "***...good actions remove those that are evil...***", **(Sura Hud, No. 11, verse 114)**. Also, the verses of forgiveness and repentance say that with the forgiveness by *Allah* and repentance by Man, sins will be obliterated. Then, how do these senses match with the seeing of all good and evil deeds in the Hereafter?

To answer this question we must pay attention to the fact that the idea mentioned in these verses is that '***whoever has done an atom's weight of good or evil shall behold it***' is a general rule, and we know that there are exceptions to most rules and the verse of forgiveness, repentance, cancellation, and excommunication are, in fact, exceptions to this general rule.

Another answer is that in the cases of '***cancellation***' and '***excommunication***', indeed, there occurs a balance and division, just like '***claims***' and '***debts***' that are reduced from each other. When Man sees

the remaining balance, he has, indeed, seen all his good and bad actions. This word is also true about forgiveness and repentance, because forgiveness does not happen without it not being worthy of the case, and repentance is, itself, one of the good actions.

The appearance of the verses shows that they refer to the actions of this world and the fruit of them in the Next World.

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The Most Expressive Verses of the Qur'an.

It is narrated from 'Abdillāh - ibn - i - Mas'ūd that the most decisive verses of the Holy Qur'an are those very verses that say: ***"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it." "And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it"***. He has rendered them to mean '***consistent***'. And, verily, the true belief in their contents is enough to bring Man on the right path and keeps him far from committing any vice and corruption.

There is a tradition which says that once a man came to the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) and asked him to teach him something from what *Allah* had taught him. The holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) sent him to one of his followers to teach him the Qur'an. He taught the man **Sura Zilzāl** to the end. Then, the man was ready to leave saying that that was sufficient for him. (Another narration has cited that he said: '***That very verse alone was sufficient for him***'). The holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) said: ***"Let him go since he became a scholar."*** (And according to another narration he said: ***"He returned as a scholar."***) [1] The reason is clear because, he who knows his deeds will be counted later, even those that are as small as a mustard seed, will pay careful attention to his actions today; and this is the best lesson to train him. Furthermore, on the Day of Judgement one good action will be counted ten to seven hundred times as much for those that *Allah* wills, while one sin will be counted as only one for divine pushishment; and *Allah* is forgiving.

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1 Tafsīr-i-Rūh-ul-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 495 and Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 650.

Supplication:

O Lord! When Your Messenger, with that great rank he has, is hopeful only to Your forgiveness, our condition is obvious.

O Lord! Our good deeds are naught to save us, but happy is when Your Grace comes forth to help!

O Lord! On the Day when all deeds, good and evil, will be embodied in front of us, we hope for Your profound Favor alone.

The End
Sura Zilzāl
(The Quaking)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura ʻĀdiyāt (The Chargers)

No. 100 (11 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

Opinions are divided as to the place where the revelation of this Sura took place; whether it was at Mecca or Medina.

The verses of the Sura are short; where oaths are emphasized on, and the Resurrection is seriously referred to. These are some characteristics which confirm that the Sura is Meccan.

But, on the other hand, the content of the oaths, of this Sura, refer mostly to the affairs of Holy War, which we will discuss in detail later, and, also to the existence of the narrations which denote that this Sura was revealed after the war known as /ðāt-us-salāsil/, indicating that the Sura is Medinan, even though we consider that the introductory oaths of the Sura point to the movement of pilgrimages toward Mashʻar (Sacred Monument) and Mina. (This war happened in the eighth year A.H. in which many pagans were captured. They were bound in chains and that was why it was called the battle of /ðāt-us-salāsil/.)

With attention to all of the above, we prefer to consider this Sura Medinan.

From the aforementioned statements, it is understood that at the beginning of the Sura there are some awakening oaths and, then, reference is made to some human weaknesses like blasphemy, miserliness, and mamonism. Concluding the Sura, a comprehensive hint is made to the Resurrection, and the fact that *Allah* knows everything about His servants.

The Virtue of Studying Sura ʻĀdiyāt:

On the virtue of reciting this Sura, the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) is narrated to have said: ***"He who recites this Sura will be rewarded ten good deeds as many as the number of the people who stay at Muzdalafah***

(Mash'ar, Sacred Monument) and gather witnessing it." [1]

Another tradition from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) says: *"He who recites Sura 'Ādiyāt and continues reciting it Allah will raise him up with Amir-al-Mo'mineen (Ali, a.s.) on Doomsday and he will be with him (a.s.) and his companions."* . [2]

Some narrations denote that the virtue of reciting this Sura is as much as the virtue of reciting half of the Qur'an. [3]

It is clear, without any explanation, that all these excellences are for those who believe in its contents thoroughly and act accordingly.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 527.

2 Ibid.

3 Durr-al-Manthūr, vol. 6, p. 383.

Sura ʿĀdiyāt
(The Chargers)

No. 100 (verses 1-11)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ وَ ٱلْعَٰدِيَٰتِ ضَبْحًا

٢ فَٱلْمُورِيَٰتِ قَدْحًا

٣ فَٱلْمُغِيرَٰتِ صُبْحًا

٤ فَأَثَرْنَ بِهِۦ نَقْعًا

٥ فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِۦ جَمْعًا

٦ إِنَّ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ لِرَبِّهِۦ لَكَنُودٌ

٧ وَإِنَّهُۥ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ

٨ وَإِنَّهُۥ لِحُبِّ ٱلْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ

٩ أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِى ٱلْقُبُورِ

١٠ وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِى ٱلصُّدُورِ

١١ إِنَّ رَبَّهُم بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ

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Sura 'Ādiyāt
(The Chargers)

No. 100 (verses 1-11)

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

1. "By the panting chargers,"
2. "And by those that sprint striking fire (with their hooves),"
3. "And by those which charge at dawn,"
4. "And stir thereby the dust aloft,"
5. "And penetrate into the midst (of the enemy) En masse.
6. "Surely, man is ungrateful to his Lord;"
7. "And surely he is a witness to that;"
8. "And most surely he is tenacious in the love of wealth."
9. "Does he not know, when that which is in the graves is raised,"
10. "And that which is in the breasts is made known,"
11. "Surely their Lord is aware of them on That Day?"

The Occasion of Revelation:

A tradition says that this Sura was revealed after the occurrence of the war / ðāt-us-salāsil /. The description is as follows:

In the eighth year A.H. the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) of Islam was informed that twelve thousand strong had gathered in Yābis to make a sudden and very heavy attack on Medina to kill the Muslims, the holy Prophet and Ali (*p.b.u.th.*) as well.

Upon receiving the news of this gathering of hostile forces, the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) sent a group of the Muslim followers to them under the command of some of his companions, but they returned without gaining any positive result. Finally, he sent Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) with a great number of the emigrants (Muhajirs), and the helpers, under his command, to meet them.

They marched by night and kept themselves concealed by day and,

thus, they reached the enemy. Surrounding the enemy's forces, Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h*) offered them (to follow the religion of) Islam at first, but they did not accept it. Then, the Muslims attacked them in the early hours of dawn when it was still dark and won an easy victory. Most of the enemy's men were killed, and those who remained, Ali *(p.b.u.h.)* put them in chains and took them, with their collective properties, to the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) in Medina.

Before the Muslim forces reached Medina, this Sura was revealed. The holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) came out early that very morning and recited this Sura in prayer. After finishing the prayer some Muslim followers told him that they had not heard that Sura before. Then, he agreed and added that Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) defeated the enemies, and Gabriel, bringing that Sura, had informed him of it the previous night.

A few days later Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) entered Medina with the 'spoils of war' and captives. [1]

Some believe that this is one of the clear examples of the verse and it is not an occasion of revelation.

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Commentary:

By Those Which Raid At Dawn.

As it was said earlier, this Sura begins with some awakening oaths. At first, it says:

"By the panting chargers."

Some believe that the verse means: '***By the camels, of pilgrims, which run with panting breath from 'Arafat to Mash'ar (Sacred Monument) and run from Mash'ar to Mina.***'

The term / ʿādiyāt / is the plural form of / ʿādiyah / based on /'adw/ that originally means '***to pass; to separate***' and also '***enmity; running***', but, here it means '***to run swiftly***'.

The term / ḍabḥ / means '***the sound of breathing hard of a running horse.***'

As mentioned above, there are two different ideas in commenting on this verse:

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1 Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 21, p. 66 ; and Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 528.

The first idea says that the objective point of the oath is the horses which run swiftly towards the battlefields of Holy War, and since Holy War is a sacred action, these animals that run on its path are so worthy that they deserve to be sworn to.

The second idea considers the oath to be to the swift camels, of pilgrims, that run fast between the sacred places of Mecca and for the same reason they have a kind of sacredness that is fit to be sworn to.

On the occasion of revelation, of this Sura, some people, such as Ibn-Abbas and so on, have said that they are the horses that the Muslim fighters rode on to fight in the Battle of Badr, but Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) is narrated to have rejected this idea and said that there were only two horses in the Battle of Badr: One belonged to Zubayr and the other was Miqdād's. On the contrary, they were the camels that ran from 'Arafāt to Mash'ar and from Mash'ar to Mina'. Ibn-Abbas said when he heard that meaning from Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) he changed his mind and accepted the latter.

It is also probable that / 'ādiyāt / has such a vast meaning that consists of both the horses of the fighters and the camels of the pilgrims, and the purpose of the above narration is that its meaning should not be limited to horses, because this meaning is not right everywhere such as the clear example of it being the camels of pilgrims.

In some respects, this commentary seems more appropriate.

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"And by those that sprint striking fire (with their hooves)."

The chargers pant, in war, obeying their masters. They sprint so fast that fire, which can be seen brighter at night, strikes from their hooves. Or, the camels, in Hajj pilgrimage, that run swiftly from one station to another, kick gravel from under their feet which strike each other and sometimes causes sparks to appear.

The term / mūriyāt / is the plural form of / mūriyah / derived from / īrā' / which means '***to make fire***'; and the term / qadḥ / means '***to strike pieces of stone, wood, iron or flint to each other in order to produce sparks.***'

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Then, in the third oath, it says:

"And by those which charge at dawn."

It was a custom of the Arabs, as Tabarsī cites in Majma'-al-Bayān, that they used to approach their foe by night and waited until dawn to make their attack.

In describing the occasion of revelation of these verses (or one of its clear examples) it was said that the troops of Islam under the leadership of Hazrat Ali (***p.b.u.h.***) went toward the enemy by night. After reaching the foe they waited nearby until dawn when they attacked them quickly and violently and defeated them before they could show a considerable reaction.

And if the oaths refer to the camels of pilgrims, the purpose of this verse is '***the rush of camels from Mash'ar to Mina at the dawn of the Day of Sacrifice***'.

The term /muqīrāt/ is the plural form of /muqīrat/ based on /iqārat/ with the sense of '***to invade; raid; attack***', and since this invasion is sometimes done with the purpose of taking the wealth of others, it is also used in the sense of '***predatory invasion***'.

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Then, it points to another speciality of those warriors and the mounts they ride on, saying:

"And stir thereby the dust aloft".

Or, because of the invasion of the camels, of pilgrims, from Mash'ar to Mina, the dust raised in the air.

The term /aθarna/ derived from /iθārah/ has the meaning of raising '***dust or smoke***' and, sometimes, it has been used in the sense of '***evoking, stirring***' and also with the meaning of the '***broadcasting of the sound waves in space***'.

The term /naq'/ means '***dust***' and it originally means '***to sink in water; to soak***' and since going through dust is similar to that, this word has been employed for it.

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For the last characteristic of their specialities it says:

"And penetrate into the midst (of the enemy)".

That attack was so quick and all of a sudden that the believers

could cleave the enemy's force in a very short time and rushed into the midst of them to destroy them. That victory was obtained because of a swift action and the awareness, preparedness and courageousness of the believing warriors.

Or, it refers to the arrival of the pilgrims from Mash'ar into the center of Mina.

On the whole, we can conclude that the oaths are made to the chargers, to the brave defenders of Faith, to the panting breaths of the mounts of the warriors, to the striking fire from their hooves, to their swift attack, to the particles of dust scattered in the air, and finally to their penetration into the midst of the foe and to their victory. Although these ideas are not totally mentioned in the meanings of these oaths, they are all gathered in the implication of the words. Furthermore, they show how important the Holy War is.

Some have said that the oaths refer to the persons who can convey their virtues to others, make the sparks of knowledge manifest with their thoughts, attack at low desires and raise the level of the love for *Allah* both in themselves and others, and, finally, dwell in the midst of those who are in ʻIlliyīn, '***Heaven***'. [1]

But, it clearly seems that these interpretations cannot be accepted as the commentary of the above verses except as being as a comparison regarding the commentary of the verse which is under discussion.

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The substantive proposition of the great oaths, that is, what the oaths are taken for, is mentioned in verses 6-8 below. It says:

"***Surely, man is ungrateful to his Lord***".

Man, i.e. unregenerate man who forgets or denies the divine guidance and the Prophets' preachings, and submits himself to his lusts, is surely ungrateful, and grossly selfish to his Lord and Cherisher.

The term / kanūd / is used for '***a land wherein nothing grows, or a person who is ungrateful and miserly***'.

Commentators have cited about fifteen different meanings for the term / kanūd / , but, they are, more or less, branches of the same as the original meaning cited above.

1 Tafsīr-i-Baydāwī, p. 495.

The holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) said about it in a tradition: *"The one who withholds his help (from others), and beats his servant is 'kanūd'.* [1]

On the whole, /kanūd/ '*an ungrateful man*', here, is in contrast with those who receive guidance and wage unceasing war with evil, then, some have commented on it as being an '*unbeliever*'.

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"And surely he is a witness to that".

Man is a witness to that because he has insight into himself. If he could conceal his true inner character from others he would not be able to hide it from *Allah* and his own conscience; whether he confesses this fact or not.

Some have said that the pronoun in /innahū/ refers to *Allah*, i.e. *Allah* is the witness to Man who has the quality of being '*ungrateful*'.

But, regarding the verses before and after this verse whose similar pronouns refer to Man, this possibility seems very improbable, though many commentators have preferred this commentary.

It is also probable that the purpose is the witness of Man to his sins and wrong actions on the Day of Judgement, as many verses of the Qur'an confirm.

This very last commentary, here, goes without saying that Man is his own witness. The verse has a broad meaning so that it envelops the idea that Man is witness to his own ungratefulness and miserliness in this world, too.

It is true that Man is sometimes unable to know himself, so, he decieves his conscience and, then, his hideous evil behaviour, with the ornament of Satan, appears to him beautiful and correct; but, for the problem of ungratefulness and miserliness the case is so clear that he cannot conceal it or deceive his conscience.

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Again, in the next verse, it says:

"And most surely he is tenacious in the love of wealth".

And the same tenaciousness in the love of wealth causes his ungratefulness and miserliness.

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[1] Majma'-al Bayān, vol. 10, p. 530.

The term /xayr/ has a vast meaning including any good or goodness such as charity, gifts of money or kind, public welfare, knowledge, Heaven, happiness, etc. Certainly, the love of them is not a reproachable thing that the Qur'an blames in the above sense. That is why the commentators have rendered it, here, into '***wealth***' which has sense both in the above verse and in some other verses of the Qur'an. For example, **Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verse 180** says: "***It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if you leave any goods, that you make a bequest to parents and next of kin,...***" .

Surely using the term /xayr/ for the sense of '***wealth***' is for the sake of wealth, itself, which is a good thing because it can be the means of doing numerous kinds of good, however, the ungrateful disbelieving man changes its real goal and uses it in the way of self-interest.

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Then, in the next verses, where interrogation is for an emphasis, with a threatening tone, it says:

"***Does he not know, when that which is in the graves is raised***"?

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"***And that which is in the breasts is made known?***"

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"***Surely their Lord is aware of them on That Day***"

The term /buʻθira/ is based on /baʻθarat/ and originally means '***to scatter abroad; turn upside down***' and since the graves turn upside down when the dead rise and what is in them appears, then, this meaning has been used for the Resurrection.

The term / qubūr / is the plural form of / qabr / '***grave***' and is used for the place that covers the corpse from the sight of Mankind, because some people have no grave, for instance, like those whose corpses are sunk in the sea or are burnt and the remaining ashes scattered, so the term has a broad meaning here.

The term / ḥuṣṣila / is derived from / taḥṣīl / which means, here, '***to make manifest***'. The deeds of everyone, good or evil, will be made manifest on the Day of Judgement and they will be rewarded accordingly. It is similar to what **Sura Tāriq, No. 86, verse 9** says: "***On the Day when hidden things will be made manifest***".

We know that *Allah* always knows everything, but the idea of '*That Day*' is an emphasis on this matter that He knows all their secrets and on that Day, which is the day of retribution, He will reward them their deeds and beliefs.

Yes, *Allah* is always aware and in all circumstances, knows any secret that we have, inside or out, but the fruit of this awareness is more clear and more tangible for us in the *Hereafter* when we receive our reward or penalty. This is also a warning to all Mankind, the belief of which is a firm barrier between them and sins whether they are clear or hidden, outside or in. The training effect of this belief is not concealed from anyone.

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Explanation:

Is Man Naturally Ungrateful?

It is possible that some persons think of the verse: "***Surely man is ungrateful to his Lord***" in a way that the state of being '***ungrateful***' is within the nature of all men. If so, how does it adapt to the invitation of Man's innate nature and wakeful conscience to giving thanks to the Benefactor?

A similar state to this question is found in many verses of the Holy Qur'an which introduces Man to some cases of his weaknesses. For example, in **Sura Aḥzāb, No. 33, verse 72** it says: "***...He was indeed unjust and foolish (ignorant)***".

Sura Ma'arij, No. 70, verse 19 qualifies Man as '***impatient***', saying: "***Truly man was created impatient***".

Sura Hūd, No. 11, verse 9 says: "***...he is in despair and (falls into) blasphemy***".

And **Sura 'Alaq, No. 96, verse 6** says about him: "***Nay! Most surely man does transgress (all bounds)***".

Are all these weaknesses really found in Man? **Sura Asrā' , No. 17, verse 70** stipulates that: "***We have honoured the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our Creation***".

Taking note of one point makes the answer to this question clear. The point is that Man has two poles in his entity and it is for the same

reason that he can be the best of all in one dimension, or be the worst unto the lowest of the low in another.

If he accepts the guidance of the divine educators, the lessons of the prophets, and follows the inspirations of his conscience in self-perfection, he will become an example of those about whom *Allah* says: ***"We have honoured the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea, given them for sustenance things good and pure, and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our Creation"***.

But, if he turns his back on Faith and piety and goes astray from the path of the divine prophets, he changes into an '***unjust***', '***ignorant***', '***desperate***', '***impatient***' and '***ungrateful***' ingrate.

Thus, there would be no contrast found in them, but, each of them refers to one of the dimensions (poles) of Man.

Yes, Man can obtain all the good things, virtues, and honours whose origin is inside Man's own nature, as he can go unto the farthest point of the opposite direction. That is why no creature in the world is able to cover such a large and long distance between these two extremes of high and low.

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Supplication:

O Lord! Bestow on us the success of being in the Holy War on the way of gaining Your pleasure.

O Lord! The despotic soul tends towards ungratefulness and blasphemy; please, save us from its harm.

O Lord! You know the apparent and hidden secrets of all, and You know our actions; treat us with Your Mercy and Kindness.

The End

Sura ʻĀdiyāt

(The Chargers)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Qāri'ah (The Calamity)

No. 101 (11 Verses)

Contents of Sura Qāri'ah:

This Sura, on the whole, describes the Resurrection Day and its preliminary events. The style is alarming and awakening with some clear warnings. According to this Sura, people are divided into two definite groups: Those whose good deeds weigh heavy by the Divine Scales will rejoice in a pleasant life; and those whose good deeds weigh light will have the abyss as their abode.

The name of the Sura, **Al-Qāriah**, is taken from the first verse.

The Virtue of Studying this Sura:

On the virtue of reciting the Sura, a tradition from Imam Bāqir (*p.b.u.h.*) says: "***He who recites Al-Qāri'ah , Allah secures him from the calamity of (believing in) Dajjāl (the deceiver) and also from the hideousness of Hell on the Day of Judgement, Allah willing.***" [1]

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 530.

Sura Qāri'ah
(The Calamity)

No. 101 (verses 1-11)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ اَلْقَارِعَةُ

٢ مَا اَلْقَارِعَةُ

٣ وَمَآ أَدْرٰىكَ مَا اَلْقَارِعَةُ

٤ يَوْمَ يَكُونُ اَلنَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ اَلْمَبْثُوثِ

٥ وَتَكُونُ اَلْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ اَلْمَنفُوشِ

٦ فَأَمَّا مَن ثَقُلَتْ مَوَٰزِينُهُ

٧ فَهُوَ فِى عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ

٨ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَٰزِينُهُ

٩ فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ

١٠ وَمَآ أَدْرٰىكَ مَاهِيَهْ

١١ نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

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Sura Qāri'ah
(The Calamity)

No. 101 (verses 1-11)

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "The Calamity"

2. "What is the Calamity?"

3. "And what makes you aware of what the Calamity is?"

4. "(It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about,"

5. "And the mountains will be like carded wool."

6. "So, he whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy,"

7. "He will be in a life well-pleasing."

8. "And he whose scales (of good deeds) are light,"

9. "Then his abode will be 'Hāwiyah' (the abyss)."

10. "And what makes you know what that (abyss) is?"

11. "(It is) a Raging Fire."

Commentary:

The Calamity.

In these verses, which are about the circumstances of the Judgement Day, first it says:

"The Calamity"

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"What is the Calamity?"

The term /qāri'ah/ is based on /qar'/ which means '***to beat or strike something on something else so that a sound is heard***', hence '***whip***' and '***hammer***' are termed /miqra'ah/, and further, any important, grievous event is called /qāri'ah/.

Regarding the senses put in verses 2 and 3 that even the holy

Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) is told: "***And what makes you aware of what the Calamity is***", clarifies the fact that this event is so great that no imagination can comprehend it.

In any event, many commentators have said that /qāri'ah/ is one of the names of the Day of Judgement. They have not clarified that this sense refers to the events before the Hereafter when this world will be destroyed, the Sun and the Moon will become dark, and the seas will overflow. If it is so, the name selected for the event, **Qāri'ah** , has a clear reason.

Or, if the purpose is the second stage, i.e., the resurrection of the dead and the new design in the world of being, the use of the word 'qāri'ah' is for the reason that fear and terror of that Day will strike the hearts.

The verses following that verse partly agree with the incident of the world destruction, and partly refer to the resurrection of the dead, but, on the whole, the first probability seems more appropriate, though both incidents, in these verses, are mentioned one after another; (like many other verses of the Qur'an which inform about the Hereafter).

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Then, to describe that amazing Day, it says:

"***(It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about.***"

The term / farāš / is the plural form of / farāšah /. Many commentators have considered it as meaning '***moths***' while some others have rendered it to mean '***locusts***'. The meaning of the word, itself, is the former one, of course, so they may have adapted it to the meaning in **Sura Qamar, No. 54, verse 7** in which people, on That Day, are likened to '***scattered locusts***': "***They will come forth,--their eyes humbled--from their graves, (torpid) like locusts scattered abroad.***"

It is probable that likening people to '***moths***' is for the reason that the state of moths in a violent storm gives some idea of the confusion, distress, and helplessness of which men are overwhelmed with on the Day of Judgement.

Again, the question arises, here, thus: "***Is this confusion, distress and horrible helplessness because of the end of this physical world, or, is it because of the beginning of the spiritual world, the Hereafter?***".

The answer to the question is clearly found in what is said above.

Then, referring to another speciality of that Day, it says:

"And the mountains will be like carded wool."

The term /'ihn/ means *'colored wool'*, and the term /manfūš/, based on /nafš/, means *'teased, carded (wool)'* which is usually done by special means on a wool-carder.

It was mentioned before that according to the different verses of Qur'an, at the threshold of the Hereafter, first, mountains will move, then, they will cleave asunder and break into pieces, and finally they will turn into dust and scatter in the air, which, in this verse, is likened to colored-carded wool; the wool which travels with storms and will be seen only by its color. This is the last stage in the destruction of the mountains.

This idea may also refer to the various colors of the mountains, because the mountains, on the earth, range in color and each has a special color.

In any case, this meaning shows that the above verses speak about the first stage of the Hereafter; that is, the stage of destruction and the end of the world.

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Then, reference is made to the Resurrection stage and the reviving of the dead and their division into two groups. It says:

"So, he whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy,"

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"He will be in a life well-pleasing."

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"And he whose scales (of good deeds) are light,"

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"Then his abode will be 'Hāwiyah' (the abyss)."

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"And what makes you know what that (abyss) is?"

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"(It is) a Raging Fire."

The term / mawāzīn / is the plural form of / mīzān / which

means '***scales, balance***'; an instrument which was used for weighing material things, at first, and then, figuratively, was used for measuring spiritual things, too.

Some believe that, on That Day, the deeds of Man will appear in the form of corporeal beings which can be weighed, and they will actually be weighed by deed-scales.

It is also considered that the record, itself, may be weighed and if it contains good deeds recorded, it weighs heavy, otherwise, it is light or weightless.

But, apparently, it does not need these explanations. The instrument for measuring deeds is not necessarily the ordinary weighing which is done with two scales, but it can be by any means of weighing, as a tradition says: "***Amir-al-Mo'mineen and other Imams from his descendents (p.b.u.th.) are the scales by which our deeds are measured.***" [1]

A tradition from Imam Sādiq (***p.b.u.h.***) denotes that when he was asked about the meaning of / mīzān / he answered: "***The scales and Justice are the same.***" [2]

Thus, with the existence of *Allah's* saints and/or the divine laws of justice by which the deeds of Man are compared, will be weighed and valued due to their similarity and adaptability to them.

By the way, the term / mawāzīn /, in its plural form, shows that the saints of *Allah* and the divine laws are individually separate scales of measurement, otherwise, the variety of the form and kind of Man's attributes and deeds demand different means of measurement.

Rāqib cites in Mufradāt: "***In the Holy Qur'an / mīzān / is sometimes used in the singular and sometimes in the plural form; the former refers to the One Who reckons, the Lord, and the latter refers to those who are reckoned with.***"

The term / 'īšat-ir-rāḍiyah / '***a life well-pleasing***' used in the verse, is a very interesting sense about the favourable life of the good-doers in Heaven which is thoroughly calm and pleasant. It is so pleasant that the life, itself, is '***well-pleasing***', which is the subjective case, instead of being '***well-pleased***', which is the objective case.

This great privilege is only for the next life, because however

1 Bihār-al-Anwār, vol. 7, p. 251.

2 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 2, p. 5.

much happy, favourable, safe, and pleasant the life of this world may be it is still not free from many unpleasant factors. It is only the next-world-life that is thoroughly favourable, happy, and pleasant with full safety, tranquility and bounty.

The word /umm/ '***mother***', mentioned in the verse, is for the reason that mother is generally a shelter for the child when there is trouble and, here, it indicates that the sinner whose scale of good actions is light has no shelter, but Hell, and woe unto the one whose shelter is '***Hell***'.

The term / hāwiyah / is based on / hawaya / in the sense of '***to fall***' and it is one of the names of Hell, because sinners fall into it and, also, it denotes to the depth of the blazing fire of Hell.

The term / hāmiyah / is based on / hamy / with the meaning of '***violent heat***', and / hāmiyah /, here, refers to the extraordinary burning, hot fire of Hell.

In any case, the phrase "***And what makes you know what that (abyss) is?***" "***(It is) a Raging Fire***" is an emphasis on the idea that chastisement of the Hereafter and the fire of Hell is beyond the consideration of all men.

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Weighing the Good Deeds; The Deciding Factors.

No doubt, the values of the deeds of good-doers are not the same. They are very different from each other. So, some good actions, which are the cause of the scales of deeds being heavier on the Day of Judgement, are emphasized on more than others.

According to a tradition, commenting on the phrase '***There is no god, but Allah***', the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) said: "***It points to the Oneness of Allah and no action is accepted by Allah without it. It is the word of virtue by which the scales of deeds will be weighed heavy on the Day of Judgement.***".[1]

In another tradition from Hazrat Ali (***p.b.u.h.***) about the attestation to the Oneness of Allah and the prophecy of the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) he has said: "***The scales by which deeds are measured***

1 Nūr uth Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 659, tradition 12.

without these two are light and they are heavy with them.". [1]

Another tradition from Imam Bāqir or Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.th.*) says: ***"There is nothing on the scales heavier than the benediction upon Prophet Mohammad and the progeny of Mohammad."***. Then, he continues saying: ***"On the Day of Judgement some people will come for their account whose scale of (good) deeds are light, but, these will become heavy when the 'benediction upon Prophet Mohammad and the progeny of Mohammad' is added to it."***. [2]

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Supplication:

O Lord! Change the scales of our good deeds to heavy from our love for Mohammad and the progeny of Mohammad (p.b.u.th.).

O Lord! It is impossible for us to approach the state of 'being in a life well-pleasing', but by Your Favor. Might You, Yourself, help us to reach it.

O Lord! The Fire of Hell is a blazing inferno and we cannot bear it. By Your Grace keep us far from it.

The End

Sura Qāri'ah
(The Calamity)

1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 659, tradition 8.

2 Ibid., tradition 7.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Takāthur

(Vying in Exuberance)

No. 102 (8 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

Numerous commentators believe that this Sura has been revealed in Mecca; then the subject mentioned in the Sura about vying and self-glorification is, customarily, refering to the tribes of Quraish who used to boast to each other, in vain, about worthless affairs.

But, some others, such as the late Tabarsī who cited his idea in Majma'-al-Bayān, believe that the Sura was revealed in Medina, and what is said in it about vying and boasting in each other's sight refers to the Jews or to two tribes among the 'Ansār'. But, regarding the close similarity that this Sura, being Meccan, has with the Meccan Suras, seems more proper.

The content of the Sura, in general, is, firstly, a scorn on those people who, based on things of no value, boast to each other; secondly, there is a warning about the proposition of the Hereafter and the Hell-fire; and, finally, warning that we will be questioned about the bounties in our life.

The name of the Sura is derived from the words in the first verse.

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The Virtue of Studying Sura Takāthur:

On the virtue of reciting the Sura, a tradition from the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) says: "***He who recites it, Allah will not account the bounties he was given in the world and He will award him such a reward as if he had recited one thousand verses (of the Qur'an).***" [1]

A tradition from Imam Sādiq denotes that "***the recitation of this Sura in the obligatory and optional prayers has a reward similar to Martyrdom.***". [2]

It is obvious that these total rewards are for the one who recites it, practices it in his daily life and harmonizes his mind and soul with it.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 532.

2 Ibid.

Sura Takāthur
(Vying in Exuberance)

No. 102 (verses 1-8)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ أَلْهٰيكُمُ ٱلتَّكَاثُرُ

٢ حَتّٰى زُرْتُمُ ٱلْمَقَابِرَ

٣ كَلَّاسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

٤ ثُمَّ كَلَّاسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

٥ كَلَّالَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ ٱلْيَقِينِ

٦ لَتَرَوُنَّ ٱلْجَحِيمَ

٧ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ ٱلْيَقِينِ

٨ ثُمَّ لَتُسْئَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍعَنِ ٱلنَّعِيمِ

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Sura Takāthur
(Vying in Exuberance)

No. 102 (verses 1-8)

1. "Engageth you (your) vying in exuberance."

2. "Until you visit the graves."

3. "Nay! You shall soon know,"

4. "Again, Nay! You shall soon know."

5. "Nay! Were you to know with the knowledge of certainty, (you would beware!)"

6. "You shall certainly see the blazing fire,"

7. "Again, you will surely see it with certainty of sight!"

8. "Then, on that Day you will surely be questioned about the joy (you indulged in)."

The Occasion of Revelation:

As we mentioned before, commentators believe that this Sura was revealed against the tribes who vied in boasting with one another and prided themselves on increasing their wealth, position, and the number of their adherents so to add to the number of men in each tribe, they even went to the cemetery and counted the tribal graves.

Some believe that the meaning refers to two tribes from the tribes of Quraish in Mecca, while some others think it refers to two tribes from the helpers of the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), the Anṣār, in Medina; and, still, some relate it to the vying of the Jews to others, though to consider the Sura Meccan seems more appropriate.

But, it is certain that whatever these occasions of revelation could be, they never limit the meaning of the verse.

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Commentary:

The Affliction of Vying in Exuberance!

In these verses, at first, in a scorning tone, it says:

"Engageth you (your) vying in exuberance".

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"Until you visit the graves",

to enumerate the graves of your dead.

In commenting on the verse, this probability has also been conveyed that '***vying***' has engaged them so much so that it will continuously persist until they enter their graves. But, the first meaning, '***Until you visit the graves***' considering the occasion of revelation and also the words of Hazrat Ali (***p.b.u.h.***) in Nahj-ul-Balāqa, which will be dealt with later, is more fitting.

The term / alhākum / is based on the root / lahw / with the meaning of '***amusement, being busy with unimportant small things and neglectful of great aims and ideas.***' Rāqib cites in Mufradāt: "***The word /lahw/ means something that amuses one with itself and detains him from his real goals.***"

The term / takāθur / is derived from, / kiθrat / with the sense of '***vying, glorifying and boasting in each other's sight***'.

The term /zurtum/ is based on /ziyārat/ and /zaur/ which originally means '***the upper part of the chest***' and, later, it has been used in the sense of '***to visit***' and '***to face with***'.

The term / maqābir / is the plural form of / maqbirah / with the meaning of '***the place of the grave of a corpse***'; and visiting the graves metaphorically means '***death***', (according to some commentaries), or it has the meaning of '***going to the graves in order to vie for the number of the dead***'.

As it was said earlier, the second meaning seems more proper. One of the evidences to this idea is the words of Hazrat Ali (***p.b.u.h.***), on this matter, cited in Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Sermon No. 221, that after reciting "***Engageth you (your) vying in exurberance***", "***Until you visit the graves***", he said: "***How distant (from achievement) is their aim, how neglectful are these visitors and how difficult is the affair. They had not taken lessons from things which are full of lessons, but, they took them from***

far off places. Do they boast on the dead bodies of their forefathers, or do they regard the number of dead persons as a grounds for feeling boastful of their numbers? They want to revive the bodies that have become spiritless and the moments that have ceased; those which are more entitled to be a source of lesson than a source of pride and those are more suitable for being a source of humility than of honour." [1]

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In the next verse they are severly threatened:

"Nay! You shall soon know,"

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"Again, Nay! You shall soon know."

A group of commentators have considered these two verses as a repetition and emphasis on one matter. They, in a general form, inform of the punishments waiting for these vying, proud people.

Some have related the first verse to the chastisement in the graves and purgatory after the death that Man is faced with, and the second to the punishment in the Hereafter.

It is narrated that Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (*p.b.u.h.*), in a tradition, said: *"Some of us were in doubt about the chastisement in the grave until the time that Sura Takāthur was revealed, (*the verse*) says: 'Nay! You shall soon know' which indicated (*the punishment*) in the grave, and (*the verse*) 'Again, nay! You shall soon know' (*refers to it*) in the Hereafter.".* [2]

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Then, it adds that it is not such as you vying, proud people think. If you believed in the Hereafter and knew it with the '*knowledge of certainty*' you would never indulge in such vain affairs and vie for foolish things:

"Nay! Were you to know with the knowledge of certainty, (you would beware!)".

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1 Nah-jul-Balāqa, Sermon No. 221 (Arabic version).

2 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 534.

Then, for a stronger warning and a more emphatic statement it says:

"You shall certainly see the blazing Fire,"

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"Again, you will surely see it with certainty of sight!"

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"Then, on that Day you will surely be questioned about the joy (you indulged in)."

On That Day, you must clarify how you enjoyed the bounties of *Allah*, in your life, and whether you used them in the way of obeying *Allah* or committing sin and, consequently, wasting them.

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Explanation:

The Source of Vying:

It is understood from the above verses that one of the main factors in vying and pride is ignorance of the rewards and punishments given by *Allah* for our deeds and the lack of Faith in the Resurrection.

Besides, Man's ignorance of his weaknesses, his creation and his final destiny are among the causes of the existence of this pride and vying. That is why the Holy Qur'an, to break this vying and pride, tells the story of the destruction of some earlier nations in different verses, and how they were simply vanished while they had much power and possibilities. They were destroyed by wind, lightening, earthquake, excessive rain and, sometimes, small baked clay carried by little birds.

Yet, what is this mass of vying and pride for?

Another factor for this status is the feeling of weakness and helplessness originating from defects some people have, themselves, and they want to cover them with vying and pride. Concerning this, a tradition from Imām Sadiq (*p.b.u.h.*) says: *"No one is proud or behaves arrogantly except for the disgrace that he finds in himself."* [1]

Another tradition from Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) says: *"Two things have killed people: The fear of poverty (which forces man to*

1 Usūl-i-Kāfi, vol. 2, p. 236, tradition 17.

gather wealth by any means and any way), and demanding pride." [1]

And verily, this very unreasonable fear of poverty and vying between individuals, tribes, and societies are among the greatest causes of greed, lowliness, mamonism, destructive rivalries and many other social vices.

A tradition from the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) says: ***"I do not fear you for poverty, but I fear you because of vying."*** [2]

As it was said before, the term '***Takāthur***' originally means '***vying***', but, it is sometimes applied to the '***act of multiplying***' especially in piling up wealth.

We conclude this subject with a meaningful tradition from the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) who commenting on the verse ***"Engageth you (your) vying in exuberance"*** said: ***"Man says 'My wealth, my wealth' but you have not from your wealth save the food you eat, what you wear, and what you spend in the way of Allah."*** [3]

This is, of course, a delicate, interesting point that everyone's share from the total wealth he gathers and sometimes does not pay the least attention to whether it is lawful or unlawful, is only the very small portion that he eats, drinks, wears, and spends in the way of *Allah*; and knows that what he uses, himself, is little, then, it is better to increase his share by spending a part of it in the way of *Allah*; and the more the better.

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Certitude and its Degrees:

'***Certitude***' (yaqīn) is the opposite case to '***doubt***' as '***knowledge***' contrasts with '***ignorance***', and means '***the clarity and positiveness of something***'. According to what is understood from the Islamic narrations and traditions, one of the strongest features of Faith is called '***yaqīn***'.

Imam Bāqir (***p.b.u.h.***) said: ***"Faith is one degree higher than Islam, and 'Taqwā' virtue, is one dgree higher than Faith, and 'yaqīn', certitude, is one degree higher than 'taqwā'.*** Then, he added: ***"Nothing is***

1 Bihār-al-Anwār, vol. 73, p. 290, tradition 12.

2 Durr-ul-Manthūr, vol. 6, p. 387.

3 Sahih-i-Muslim (as Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 534 quotes).

divided less among people than certitude (yaqīn)". Then, he (***p.b.u.h.***) was asked what '***yaqīn***' meant and he replied: "***(It is) trust in Allah, obedience to Allah, well-pleasing with the Will of Allah, and leaving all of (one's) affairs to Allah***".[1]

This highness of the position of '***yaqīn***', certitude, to the positions of virtue, Faith, and Islam is somewhat like that which is mentioned and emphasized in other Islamic narrations, too.

From these statements and other evidences we clearly realize that when a person obtains the position of '***certitude***' (yaqīn) a special calmness and quietness fills his heart and his soul, completely.

In any event, certitude (yaqīn) has degrees which are referred to in the verses of the Sura under discussion and in **Sura Wāqi'ah, No. 56, verse 95**: ***"Verily, this is the very truth and certainty"***. Certainty of knowledge (yaqīn) has been described as having three stages:

1. Certitude of knowledge or certainty of mind ('Ilm-ul-yaqīn) which is the Faith that a person obtains by various means such as the one who sees smoke and believes there is fire there.
2. Certainty of Sight ('Iym-ul-yaqīn) which is what one sees with one's eyes; for instance, one sees the fire, himself.
3. The absolute truth of assured certainty (Haqq-ul-yaqīn) which means the '***realization***' or the '***knowledge proper***' and is the personal experience as when the one who arrives in the fire oneself and feels the heat of it and takes the attributes of fire into his entity. This very state is the highest degree of '***yaqīn***'.

In fact, the first stage is general; the second stage is for pious people; and the third stage is for those who are in some way chosen above others.

A tradition from the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) denotes that some people asked him about a matter that they had heard about some of the companions of Prophet Jesus (***a.s.***) who used to walk on water, and he (***p.b.u.h.***) said: ***"If their certitude was in a higher position they could walk in the air."***[2]

The late 'Allamah Tabātabāī, after mentioning this tradition, adds that everything pivots on the certitude to *Allah*, the Glorified, and to

1 Bihār-al-Anwār, vol. 70, p. 138, tradition 4.

2 Al-Mīzān, vol. 6, p. 200.

know no other means of the effects of this world, but *Allah*. Therefore, the more the Faith and certainty, in a person, is the absolute power of *Allah* , the more objects, in this world, will be obedient to him.

And this is the secret of the relation of certitude (yaqīn) and the '***extraordinary interferance***' in the world of creation.

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All Will See Hell.

The phrase /latarawonn-al-jahīm/ has two different commentaries. The first is the observation of Hell in the Hereafter, by disbelievers, or generally for all humans and Jinn.

The second meaning is its observation by spiritual intuition in this very world. In this case the phrase is the answer to the conditional proposition. It says: "***...Were you to know with the knowledge of certainty, (you would beware),***". "***You shall certainly see the blazing fire***" in this very life and with the sight of spiritual intuition, because we know that Paradise and Hell are prepared and exist just now.

But, as was said earlier, the first commentary is more fitting with the following verses which refer to the Day of Justice, therefore, this is a decisive proposition, not a conditional one.

What Bouties are Asked About in the Hereafter?

The last verse, in this Sura, denotes that on Doomsday we will be questioned about the boutines we have incurred. Some have said that it means the bounty of health and mind-security; some others believe it refers to healthiness and security and, finally, some have considered all bounties in its meaning.

A tradition from Hazrat Ali (***p.b.u.h.***) says: "***Bounty (naʿīm) is a 'ripe date' and 'cold water'.***".

According to another tradition, Abū Hanīfah asked Imam Sādiq (***p.b.u.h.***) about the meaning of this verse, then, he (***p.b.u.h.***) returned the question to him and asked him what he thought /naʿīm/ '***bounty***' was, and he replied that it was '***food***' and '***cold water***'. Then, the Imam said that if *Allah* kept him before Him to ask him about every morsel he ate and every drop of drink he drank, his stay, there, would be very long. Abū Hanīfah asked again about the meaning of /naʿīm/ and Imam (***p.b.u.h.***) said: "***It refers to us, Ahlul-Bait, for whom Allah has given His servants bounties, and made them united after they were diverse***

and joined their hearts together in brotherhood after they had been enemies (with each other) and He has guided them to Islam through us and this is the bounty that will not cease, and Allah asks them about the 'right' of the bounty which He has given them and guided them to Islam by us. Yes, 'bounty' is the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and his household." [1]

The meaning of these apparently different traditions is that the term / na'īm / has a very vast sense so that it covers all the divine bounties; from spiritual ones such as religion, Faith, Islam, Qur'an and vicegerency to material ones whether they are personal or social. But, the more important bounties like the bounty of '***Faith and vicegerency***' are asked about more from them than if they had fulfilled their complete duty to them or not.

How could it be possible that these bounties would not be asked for when they are great, useful assets endowed to Man and each of which should be appreciated, thanked and used in their appropriate ways.

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Supplication:

O Lord! Shower upon us, ceaselessly, Your unlimited bounties especially the bounty of 'Faith and vicegerency'.

O Lord! Give us the success of fulfilling our duties for them as their right is.

O Lord! Please increase these bounties for us and never deprive us from them.

The End
Sura Takāthur
(The Vying in Exuberance)

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 535.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura 'Asr (Time)

No. 103 (3 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

It is known that this Sura was revealed in Mecca, though some commentators have also said that it is probably Medinan. Its short verses, as well as its tone and style, attest to the first idea, too.

In any event, the completeness of this Sura is so much that, according to some commentators, all the knowledge and objectives of Qur'an are briefly gathered in this single Sura. In other words, this short Sura leads Man to a total complete program for his happiness.

It begins with a meaningful oath to '**Time**', whose commentary will be delivered later, to refer to the loss existing in nature along the gradual path in the lives of all human beings except for the persons who have: Faith, good deeds and who enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience. These four principles involve, in fact, the theological, practical, personal, and social doctrine of Islam.

The Virtue of Studying Sura 'Asr:

On the virtue of reciting the Sura, a tradition from Imam Sadiq (*p.b.u.h.*) says: ***"He who recites (Sura) 'Asr, in his optional prayers, Allah will raise him with a shining, bright face, cheerful features, and delighted eyes (looking upon the blessings of Allah), until when he enters Paradise on the Day of Judgement."*** [1]

It is obvious that these honours and pleasures belong to the one who practices these four principles in his life and does not suffice only to the mere reciting of the Sura.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 545.

Sura 'Asr
(Time)

No. 103 (verses 1-3)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ وَالْعَصْرِ

٢ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ

٣ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "By Time",

2. "Surely man is in loss,"

3. "Save those who believe and do good deeds, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience.

Commentary:

The Only Path To Salvation.

At the beginning of this Sura we are faced with a new oath, thus:

"By Time,"

The term /'asr/ literally means '*to press, to squeeze*' and, then, it has figuratively been used for '*evening*' meaning '*the affairs of the day are rolled and squeezed into the evening*'. After that the word has been used in the sense of -- absolute time, in general; the course in the history of Man or a part of it, such as the appearance of Islam and the Call of the

holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), and the like. This is why commentators have provided different probable meanings for the commentary of the oath which are given as follows:

1. Some have rendered it to mean the time of '*evening*' with the evidence that in some other verses of the Holy Qur'an an oath is taken to the beginning of the day, like **Sura Duha, No. 93, verse 1**: *"By the Glorious Morning Light"*, or **Sura Muddaththir, No. 74, verse 34**: *"And by the Dawn as it shineth forth"*.

This oath is made due to the importance that this time of day has, since this time is the time when the regularity in the life of Man varies; daily activities end, people return to their homes, birds and cattle come back to their shelters, the sun sets on the horizon in the West, and night gradually falls. This variation attracts Man's attention to the endless, everlasting power of *Allah* dominating over this regularity. It is, indeed, a sign out of the signs of the Divine Unity that deserves an oath to be taken to.

2. Some others consider it to be the '*Time*' through the ages of the history of Mankind, which is full of lessons and teachings from the startling events which have occured. For the same reason, it has such a dignity that matches the Divine Oath.

3. Some have emphasized on a proper part of the time like the Age of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) or the Rise of the twelfth Imam, 'Mahdi', which has peculiar specialities and a definite glory in the history of Man, to which, they say, the oath refers to. [1]

4. Some have also referred to the original meaning of the term and say that the oath points to the various kinds of stresses and difficulties that happen during the lives of people which awaken them from their neglectful sleep, reminds them of *Allah*, and develops the spirit of patience and constancy in them.

5. Some other commentators have taken it to mean '*the chosen ones*' who are the '*pick of the crop*' in the world of creation.

6. And, finally, some others have rendered the word ' *'Asr*' to mean the ceremonial afternoon prayer for its special importance among the obligatory prayers, because they interpret /salat-i-wusta/, on which the Qur'an emphasizes particularly, as afternoon prayer.

1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 666, tradition 5.

The above ideas are not contradictory to each other and they may be all correct for the meaning of the verse, and the oath could be taken to the whole of those important matters, but among all of them the most fitting one is '*Asr* with the meaning of '*Time*' and the history of Man; because, as it was said repeatedly before, the oaths of the Qur'an are in relation to the subject that the oath is taken for, and it is certain that the loss human beings incur in their lives is the consequence of passing their lifetime, or passing the Age of the Call of the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), because the command of '*four principles*', mentioned in the last part of the Sura, was revealed in that very life.

Referring to the above explanations, it makes the greatness of the Qur'an and the vastness of its meaning clear when one word of it is so expressive and deserves so many profound and diverse interpretations.

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In the following verse it refers to the object that this great oath is made to. It says:

"*Surely man is in loss*".

They, willy nilly, will lose the capital of their existence. Hours, days, months, and years of life pass quickly, spiritual and material potentialities decline and abilities fade.

Yes, Man is like a person who possesses great capital and without his permission and will, every day, a portion of that capital is taken away. This is the nature of life in this world; the nature of continual loss.

The term / xusr / as well as / xusrān /, as Rāqib cites in his book, Mufradāt, means '*declining the capital*'. Sometimes it is concerned with humans and it is said that such and such a person has suffered loss; and sometimes it is concerned with the action, itself, and it is said that the persons' bargain showed a loss. This word is often used for outward capital such as wealth and position, but it is sometimes used also for inward capital, like that of health, wisdom, faith and reward. This is the same thing that Allah has referred to as '*the evident Loss*' in **Sura Zumar, No. 39, verse 15** where it says: "*...truly those in loss are those who lose their own souls and their people on the Day of Judgement: Ah! That is indeed the (real and) evident Loss!*".

Commenting on the verse under discussion, Fakhr-i-Rāzī cites:

One of the old scholars said that he had learnt the meaning of this verse from an ice-seller who had been calling again and again: 'Have pity on him whose capital is melting'. He said to himself that it was the meaning of 'Surely man is in loss'. Time passes and one's lifetime ends, but, he does not obtain any reward. Then, he, in this case, is in loss". [1]

However, according to Islamic world-view, this world is a market of bargaining, as a tradition from Imam Ali-ibn-Mohammad Naqī (the tenth Imam) says: ***"The world is a market wherein some people gain and some others lose".*** [2]

The verse under discussion denotes that all lose in this market except a select group of people, whom will be referred to in the next verse.

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Yes, there is only one way to avoid this great compulsory loss; the only way which is pointed out in the last verse of the Sura. It says:

"Save those who believe and do good deeds, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience".

In other words, the thing that can change this great loss to profit, a wonderful gain, is that in place of losing this capital we try to obtain a more valuable and better capital in order not only to fill its empty room, but, also to earn something thousands and thousands times better and more valuable than that.

Every breath we take is a step toward death, as Hazrat Ali (***p.b.u.h.***) says: ***"The breaths of man are his steps (put forward) towards his death".*** [3]

Of course, nothing can match the priceless capital of Man; his life-time, save the pleasure of being close to *Allah* with gaining His pleasure.

Or, as Hazrat Ali (***p.b.u.h.***) has said: ***"Verily there is no price for you save Heaven. Beware not to sell it; save for it".*** [4]

There is reason for one of the names of the Hereafter being

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1 Tafsīr-i-Fakhr-i-Rāzī, vol. 32, p. 85.

2 Tuhaf-ul-'Uqūl, p. 361.

3 Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Saying 74.

4 Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Saying 456.

/yaum - ut - taqābun / *'a day of mutual loss'* (mentioned in **Sura Taqābun, No. 64, verse 9**), a day when it will be made clear who has lost.

The beauty of the matter is in that on the one hand, the buyer of the capital of the souls of the believers is *Allah*, the Almighty, as **Sura Taubah, No. 9, verse 11** says: ***"Allah hath purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise)..."***. On the other hand, He buys the little and small materials, too, when it says: ***"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it,"*** (**Sura Zilzal, No. 99, verse 7**).

And further, He pays a great deal for a little; sometimes tenfold and sometimes upto seven hundred times as much, or more than that. For example: **Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verse 261** says: ***"...Of a grain of corn: It groweth seven ears, and each ear hath a hundred grains. Allah giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth..."***.

Still more, having given all the capitals to us He, Himself, is so Gracious that He purchases them back for the dearest price.

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Explanation:

Salvation Through Four Principles:

It is interesting that the Holy Qur'an offers a complete program with four principles which can make us free from that great loss.

The first principle is ***Faith*** which forms the basis of all activities of Man, because all the practical movements he has originate from his theological doctrines, outside the realm of animals whose movements are from their instincts.

In other words, the actions of Man are reflections of his beliefs and thoughts. For the same reason all prophets used to improve the basis of the Faith of their people first and before anything else, and worked especially against blasphemy which is the source of many kinds of corruptions and miseries.

It is interesting to note that Faith, here, is mentioned in an abstract form in order to include the Faith in all things sacred, like belief in *Allah* and His attributes, belief in the Hereafter and Reckoning, reward and punishment, the Divine Books and prophets as well as their vicegerents.

In the second principle it refers to the worthy product of the fruitful tree of Faith, the Good Deeds.

What a vast and expressive sense the phrase '***good deeds***' is! Yes, verily '***good deeds***' are, indeed, not only '***worthy deeds***', adorations, charity for the sake of *Allah*, Holy War on the path of *Allah*, and learning divine knowledge, but it includes, also, every worthy action that can be a means applied in the way towards soul-perfection, moral improvement, nearness to *Allah*, and the progression of the human society in all fields.

This meaning envelops all good deeds from even the tiny ones like moving a troublesome stone out of people's way to saving millions and millions of men from aberration, perdition and going astray.

When in a tradition from Imam Sādiq (***p.b.u.h.***) '***good deeds***' is rendered into '***equivalence and generous help to bretheren***', it is a statement of a clear example.

Sometimes '***good actions***' may be issued by some unbelieving persons, but this behaviour is not certainly so profound and vast, because they are not based deeply on divine motives, thus they are hollow.

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned the word /sālihāt/ particularly in the plural form and especially with ***al*** (ال) at the beginning with the meaning of '***generality***' and indicates the fact that the shield against that natural automatic loss is, next to Faith, the fulfillment of all good deeds, and not to suffice just one or a few of them. And, truly, if Faith settles deeply in the soul of a person, this very effect will be produced in him.

Faith is not a mere single thought or belief in the mind, free from any effect, it changes the whole entity of Man to its own essense.

Faith is like a bright lamp inside a room which not only gives light to the room, but the beams penetrate through all the windows and spaces to the outside so that everyone who passes by, outside, can realize the existence of that bright light inside the room. Similarly, when a person has the light of Faith bright inside his soul, his tongue, eyes, ears, hands and feet reflect that light to others and the movements of every limb, outside, show that there is a light inside.

For that reason, in the verses of Qur'an the words '***good deed***' and '***Faith***' often come together as interdependent; for example, **Sura Nahl, No. 16, verse 97** says: ***"Whoever works righteousness, man or***

woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure...". Also, in **Sura Mo'minūn, No. 23, verses 99 and 100**, the wrong doers, after departing from this world, regret that they had not done good deeds, so, they insist on saying: ***"...O' my Lord, send me back (to life),--" "In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected...***". Again, in the same Sura, **verse 51**, *Allah* bids to His apostles: ***"O ye apostles! Enjoy (all) things good and pure, and work righteousness...***".

And since '***Faith***' and '***good deeds***' cannot endure in a society unless there is an invitation to the right and truth, and the acknowledgement of it, on the one hand, and an invitation to patience and constancy along the path of the achievement of that invitation, on the other hand, for completing the first two principles, '***Faith***' and '***good deeds***', the second two principles are, now, pointed out.

The third principle, the general invitation of all to '***Truth***' is referred to, so that all the members of the human race will fully recognize right from wrong and observing it will never forget it throughout their lives.

The term / tawāṣau / is based on / tawāṣī / and, as Rāqib cites in Mufradāt, it means ***'to enjoin or recommend to one another'***.

The term /ḥaqq/ means '***Truth***' or '***adapting to Truth***'. There are twelve meanings used or applied for this term in the Holy Qur'an, as are mentioned in 'Wujuh-i-Qur'an', such as: Allah, Qur'an, Islam, theism, justice, truthfulness, sincerity, clarity, obligation and the like, all of which refer to the root word mentioned above.

In any case, the phrase /tawāṣau-bil-ḥaqq/ has such a vast meaning that includes both ***'enjoin the good and forbidding of wrong'*** and ***'guiding with teaching the ignorant'*** or ***'admonishing the neglectful'*** and ***'encouraging and preaching Faith together with good deeds'***.

It is needless to go into the details about those who enjoin on others truth, because it is understood that they should be advocators and administrators of it in their own lives.

The fourth principle is based on ***patience, perseverance***, and ***enjoining these on each other***. Next to the acknowledgement of them, in the course of practice, everyone faces with some difficulties which need patience and constancy, otherwise, he can never adjudicate and do a righteous deed or preserve his Faith.

Yes, adjudication and execution of truth and fulfilling it in the society is not possible, except by a common decision and having constancy and perseverance against the problems.

The word '***patience***', here, has a vast meaning that involves both the patience of obedience and the patience against motivations of committing sin, and patience for bitter happenings like losing members, forces, wealth, etc.

Regarding what was said here about the four principles towards salvation, which are truly the most complete program for men to follow in their lives, it makes it clear why some narrations denote that the followers and companions of the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) used to recite **Sura 'Asr** when they reached each other or before saying good-bye and separating from each other, they reminded each other of the magnificent content of this short Sura.

Verily, if the Muslim believers of today would carry out these four principles in their personal and social lives, their problems and difficulties will be solved, their retardation will be amended, their defeats will be changed to victories, and the vice of their wickedness will be removed from them.

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Supplication:

O Lord! Bestow on us the patience and constancy needed for accepting and supporting the Truth.

O Lord! All of us are in loss and it is impossible for us to recompense it save with Your Grace.

O Lord! We wish to follow the content of the four-principle-command in the Sura; please help us to be successful.

The End
Sura 'Asr
(Time)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

Sura Humazah (The Slanderer)

No. 104 (9 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

This Sura is a Meccan Sura and condemns all sorts of scandal, and backbiting, and all those who do their best to gather and pile up wealth; for which they lose the whole value of their humanity, and defame, insult and mock those who do not possess that (wealth).

These selfish people, who are arrogant with their wealth, enjoy talking or suggesting evil of men or women by word, innuendo, behaviour, mimicry, sarcasm, or insult.

At the end of the Sura, the painful destiny of theirs is referred to. It says that they will be disgracefully thrown into Hell. Before their other belongings, the blazing fire of Hell will begin burning, withering their hearts and minds; the center of all their pride and arrogance. This ceaseless fire will be with them forever.

The Virtue of Studying Sura Humazah:

On the virtue of reciting this Sura, a tradition from the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says: "***He who recites this Sura will be rewarded 'ten good deeds' as many as the number of those who mocked Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) and his companions***".[1]

Also, a tradition from Imam Sādiq (***p.b.u.h.***) denotes that he who recites it in any of his obligatory prayers, poverty will stay away from him, sustenance will approach him, and a hideous death will be repelled from him.[2]

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 536.

2 Ibid.

Sura Humazah
(The Slanderer)

No. 104 (verses 1-9)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُمَزَةٍ

٢ ٱلَّذِى جَمَعَ مَالاً وَعَدَّدَهُ

٣ يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ

٤ كَلاَّ لَيُنبَذَنَّ فِى ٱلْحُطَمَةِ

٥ وَمَآ أَدْرَىٰكَ مَا ٱلْحُطَمَةُ

٦ نَارُ ٱللَّهِ ٱلْمُوقَدَةُ

٧ ٱلَّتِى تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى ٱلأَفْـِٔدَةِ

٨ إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِم مُّؤْصَدَةٌ

٩ فِى عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ

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Sura Humazah
(The Slanderer)

No. 104 (verses 1-9)

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Woe to every backbiter, slanderer",

2. "Who amasses wealth and hoards it,"

3. "Thinking that his wealth will make him immortal".

4. "Nay, he will certainly be hurled into the 'Ḥuṭamah' ",

5. "And what makes you know what the 'Ḥuṭamah' is"?

6. "(It is) a fire kindled by Allah",

7. "Which rises above the hearts".

8. "Surely it will be closed over upon them",

9. "In columns outstretched".

The Occasion of Revelation:

A group of commentators have said that the verses of this Sura were revealed against Walīd - ibn - i - Muqayyarah who used to backbite the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) and made sarcastic remarks and mocked him (*p.b.u.h.*).

Some others believe that they are said against some of the chiefs of the pagan Arabs and the known enemies of Islam, such as: Akhnas-ibn-i-Sharīq, Umiyat-ibn-i-Khalaf, and 'Ās-ibn-i-Wā'il.

But, even if we accept these occasions of revelation, again the generality of the meaning of the verses remains unchanged, and it covers all those who have these characteristics.

Commentary:

Woe to Every Backbiter, Slanderer!

This Sura begins with the strongest terms of a threatening nature. It says:

"Woe to every backbiter, slanderer".

They are those who sting others with their speech, behaviour, mimicry, or sarcasm at their backs or in front of them. They mock them and defame them with evil motives.

The Arabic terms /humazah/ and /lumazah/, both, are in '***the intensive amplification form***'. The term /humazah/ is based on /hamz/ which originally means '***to break***', and since backbiters and slanderers break the personality of others, the term /humazah/ is used for them. The term /lumazah/ is derived from /lamz/ with the meaning of '***to backbite***' and '***defame***'.

Commentators are divided in saying that these two terms refer to one meaning, '***backbiters***', and therefore, these two are mentioned for emphasis; or there may be a difference between them.

But, some have said that the term /humazah/ means '***backbiter***' and /lumazah/ means '***fault-finder***'.

Further, some others believe that the term /humazah/ means '***those who make innuendos with their hands and face when trying to find faults in others***', and /lumazah/ is meant for those who do this action with their tongues.

Also, some have meant the first term in the sense of '***fault-finding***' in the face of people, and the second when done at their backs.

Again, some think the first means '***apparent fault-finding***' and the second means '***subtle fault-finding done with the eyes and eyebrows***'.

And sometimes, both of the terms have been meant '***the one who defames people by using low titles for them***'.

But, from all of the above ideas it is understood that these two terms are used in the same sense with a vast meaning, so that it includes any fault-finding, defaming, backbiting, sarcasm, and mockery by tongue or mimicry.

In any event, the term /wayl/ '***woe***' is a strong threat against this group of people, and, basically, the Qur'an takes a serious stance on these kind of persons, and there are some special meanings against them in it which are not said for any other sin similar to that. For example, in **Sura Taubah, No. 9, verse 80**, after threatening those blind-hearted hypocrites with a '***grievous penalty***' for their ridicule of the Believers, it says: ***"Whether thou ask for their forgiveness, or not, (their sin is***

unforgivable): If you ask seventy times for their forgiveness, Allah will not forgive them...".

Similar to this idea in **Sura Munāfiqūn, No. 63, verse 5**, about the hypocrites who mocked the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) it says: ***"And when it is said to them, 'Come, the Apostle of Allah will pray for your forgiveness', they turn aside their heads, and thou wouldst see them turning away their faces in arrogance".***

Basically, from the point of Islam, the honour of people is considered highly respectable, hence, anything that causes them to be insulted is a great sin. A tradition from the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) says: ***"The lowest (one amongst) people is he who insults people".*** [1]

Then, it refers to the source of their hideous behaviour. It often originates from arrogance and pride caused by wealth, saying:

"Who amasses wealth and hoards it".

He likes wealth so much so that he always counts his golden coins, or other things among his riches, and enjoys them as if each of them is an idol for himself, and wealth is the center of everything in his personality. It is natural that such a foolish, astray person always mocks the poor believing people.

The term /'addadah/ is originally based on /'add/ with the sense of '***to number, reckon***'. Some have said that it may be based on /'uddah/ '***provision***' with the meaning of '***preparing and storing properties for future difficult days***'.

Some have also rendered it into obstinence and maintenance. But, the first comment is the most clear of all.

At any rate, the verse refers to those who pile up wealth not as a means of help, but, as a goal. They observe no limit or condition in gathering it, gathering it whether it is lawful or unlawful, by honourable or dishonourable ways, from their own right or others' rights, oppressively, and they know it as the only sign of dignity and personality.

They do not want wealth to use for their necessities, that is why they never become satisfied and however much they increase their wealth they are more eager and avaricious to make it greater. Otherwise, gathering wealth on a reasonable scale and through lawful

1 Bihār-ul-Anwār, vol. 75, p. 142.

means not only is not blameworthy, in Islam, but, it is sometimes referred to in the Holy Qur'an as 'the Bounty of Allah', such as **Sura Jumu'ah, No. 62, verse 10** says: ***"...And seek the Bounty of Allah..."***, and in another occurence it is rendered to /xayr/ '*good*' : ***"It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if he leave any goods, that he make a bequest..."***, **(Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verse 180).**

Such wealth is, certainly, neither a cause of rebelling, nor a means of pride, nor an excuse for mocking others. But, the wealth which is the object of worship and is the final goal and invites its owner to rebellion, such as Qārun, is shame and scorn; is misery and adversity; is the cause of being far from *Allah* and dwelling in Hell-fire.

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Gathering this kind of wealth, in abundance, is usually not possible except by committing numerous sins.

A tradition from Ali-ibn-Mūsā-ar-Riḍā (*p.b.u.h.*) says: ***"Wealth is not piled up but with five qualities: Intense stinginess, endless hope, dominant greed, breaking off connections with one's kindred, and preferring this world to the next world"***. [1]

Those who are gracious and not tied up in infinite hopes, observe the laws of the lawful and unlawful, serve their kindred, and do not hoard wealth, usually have considerable income.

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"Thinking that his wealth will make him immortal".

It is interesting that the verb /axladah/, here, is in the past tense form with the meaning that he thinks his wealth has made him as an immortal creature,--neither death nor sickness nor incidents can produce difficulties for him, because he thinks money, which he has in abundance, can solve every problem.

What a false imagnination! Qārun had such treasures that ***'their keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men'***, but, at the time of the rush of divine punishment, that wealth could not postpone his death even for a little while and *Allah* caused a short earthquake suddenly to swallow up him and his treasure: ***"Then, We caused the earth to swallow up him and his house; and he had not (the least little) party to help him***

1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 668, Tradition 8.

against Allah, nor could he defend himself", **(Sura Qaṣaṣ, No. 28, verse 81).**

The Pharoahs of Egypt had the most abundant of riches for themselves, but, as **Sura Dukhān, No. 44, verses 25-27** state: *"How many were the gardens and springs they left behind," "And corn-fields and noble buildings," "And wealth (and conveniences of life), wherein they had taken such delight".* They were easily delivered to others during a short time: *"Thus (was their end) and We made other people inherit (those things)"* **(Sura Dukhān, No. 44, verse 28).**

That is why, in the Hereafter, when the curtains will be removed and they realize their previous big mistake, they cry in agony saying: *"Of no profit to me has been my wealth!" "My power has perished from me!"* **(Sura Ḥāqqah, No. 69, verses 28, 29).**

In general, man dislikes destruction or mortality and tends to immortality and perpetuality. The existence of this very tendency helps us, in the discussions of Resurrection to know that Man has been created for eternity, otherwise he would not have the instinct of the love of perpetuality.

But, this arrogant, selfish, mamonish Man sometimes finds his perpetualtiy in some things that are just the cause of his destruction; for example, he considers wealth, which is often the enemy of his being, as a means of eternity.

This statement makes it clear that the thought of perpetuality by the means of wealth is a reason for gathering it, and gathering wealth is also a factor for having the right to mock others; or so they think.

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To respond to this group of people, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Nay! He will certainly be hurled into the Ḥuṭamah,"

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"And what makes you know what the Ḥuṭamah is?"

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"(It is) a fire kindled by Allah"

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"Which rises above the hearts".

The term / layunbðanna / is based on / nabð /. As Rāqib

says in Mufradāt, it means '*to discard something because of its being an insignificant or small amount*'.

That is, *Allah* will throw these proud, arrogant, selfish, self-content fellows; in the form of mean, unworthy creatures, into the Hell-fire so that they may see the fruit of their pride.

The term / hutamah / is an amplification form based on the word /haṭam/ with the meaning of '*to wreck; break to pieces*' which shows that the blazing fire of Hell breaks their limbs violently, although some Islamic narrations denote that /huṭaman/ is not the name of the whole Hell, but it is the name of an extraordinarily hot part of it. [1]

Using the phrase /nārallah/, here, shows the greatness of the fire, and the term / mūqadah / is an evidence to refer to the continuity of that fire kindled to a blaze.

It is a wonder that this fire, in spite of the fires in this world that first burn the skin and, then, penetrate inside to burn innner tissue, burns the heart and interior of the mind and bones, first, and, then, comes to the other parts.

What kind of fire is this fire whose first effect appears on the heart of Man? What kind of fire is it which burns inside before outside? Everything of the Hereafter is surprizing and different from that of this world, even the effect of its blazing fire.

And why does the fire of the Wrath of *Allah* not dominate their hearts first and before occupying their other limbs when, in this world, they put pain in the hearts of the believers with their mockeries, backbitings, fault-findings, slanders and taunts.?

Divine Justice requires a penalty on them similar to their behaviors.

"*Surely it will be closed over upon them.*"

The term / mu'sadah / is derived from / iṣād / with the meaning of '*to close a door firmly*', hence, the rooms made inside the mountains for gathering riches therein were termed /waṣīd/.

In fact, the same as they kept their riches in safes, locked indoors and in secret storage, *Allah*, too, puts them in a punishment shut up in Hell without having a door to flee from.

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1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 17 and 19, traditions 60 and 64.

And, finally, it says:

"In columns outstretched"

The term /'amad/ is the plural form of /'amud/ which means '***pillar, or any tall thing like a wooden pole, post, or shaft***', and the term /mumaddadah/ means '***extended, stretched (out)***'.

A group of commentators believe that this idea refers to the long iron nails by which the doors of Hell are fastened so that no exit might be found. So, it is an emphasis on the previous verse which says: "***Surely it will be closed over upon them***".

Also, some others have cited that this idea refers to a kind of torture and punishment, similar to the act of putting a person in stocks and fetters; a chain by which a person or an animal is confined by the feet. And this is the result of the tortures that they used against the innocent people in this world.

Furthermore, a third commentary is also given with reference to the new explorations which says that the blazing flames of Hell-fire are upon them in the form of some tall, stretched pillar shaped beams. These commentators say that it is proven in modern research that X-rays, different from other rays which expand in the conical shape, spread in cylindrical shape just like a pillar, and it is interesting to note that this ray penetrates through the whole entity of Man, and even goes into the heart and that is why it is used for taking photos of the inside of the body. It is understood that there is a ray in Hell rising from the blazing fire, therein, which is not unlike the above-mentioned ray.

Among these commentaries, the first one is the most appropriate.

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Explanation:

Pride, the Origin of Great Sin.

Arrogance or self-aggrandizement is a great pest which is considered to be the source of many vices; neglecting *Allah*, ingratitude of the bounties from Him, drawn into lusts, detracting from the character of others and mocking the believers are all the fruit of this hideous quality. When persons of little capacity find themselves in some position of prestige they become enveloped by pride and arrogance so that they consider others of no value, and this quality causes them to be separated from the society and society deserts them, too.

Then, they live in their own imaginations and think that they are somewhat different from others, and count themselves among '***the nearest to Allah***' which causes them to think of others' honour, character, and, even, lives as unworthy and they continue to commit their slandering, backbiting, and fault-finding against them, in order to increase their own dignity, or so they think.

A tradition from the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) denotes that he said: "***On the Night Journey (of Ascension) I saw a group of people (of Hell) whose flesh of their sides were taken and they were made to eat it, being told to eat what they used to eat of the flesh of their brothers. I asked Gabriel who they were, and he answered that they were backbiters; slanderers from my community***". [1]

The Lust For Amassing Wealth.

There are many different ideas given about the quality of amassing wealth in the way of excess and deficiency. Some consider wealth so important that they think it is the key to solving any difficult problem. So, it is no wonder that they are always busy gathering wealth without any pause and without observing any limit or condition for it. Therefore, the status of lawful and unlawful riches is indifferent in their eyes.

In contrast to them there are some people who do not give any importance or value to wealth. They praise poverty as a valuable quality and believe that wealth is still a hindrance for piety and being near to *Allah*.

But, besides these two contradictory ideas, which are on the two ends of '***excess***' and '***deficiency***', what is understood from the Qur'an and the Islamic narrations is that wealth is praiseworthy, but, with some conditions: First of all, it should be a means of service, not a goal.

The second is that wealth should not make Man its captive and dependant, but he should control it and be its master.

The third condition is that wealth should be earned through lawful ways and be spent on the path of gaining *Allah's* satisfaction.

Love for this kind of wealth not only is not mamonism, but it is evidence for the love of the next world. That is why we see, in a

1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 667, tradition 5.

tradition, that when Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) was condemning '*gold*' and '*silver*', one of his Muslim followers wondered what he meant and asked him about it. He (*p.b.u.h.*) replied: *"It is the 'gold' by which Faith (religion) disappears and it is the 'silver' which causes blasphemy".* [1]

There are some avaricious people who are always busy piling up wealth until the end of their lives, and, finally, the wealth will be left for others to take advantage of its benefit, while they, without enjoying anything, must give the account of it. A tradition from Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) denotes that he was asked: *"Who is the most sorrowful of people?"* And he replied: *"The one who sees his wealth in the scales of others, and Allah brings him into Hell because of his wealth, but He brings his heir into Heaven, (for spending that wealth on charity)".* [2]

Yes, people are different when facing riches. Some of them worship it as an idol, while some others use it as a means for their salvation.

We conclude this subject with an expressive statement from Ibn-Abbas who said: *"When the first gold and silver coins were made on the Earth, Satan looked at them and, after observing them, took them and put them on his eyes and then on his chest. Then, he squealed happily and put them, again, on his chest and said (to them): You are the light of my eyes and the fruit of my heart. When the sons of Adam love you it does not matter to me that they do not worship idols; it is enough for me that they love you (since you are the greatest idols)".* [3]

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1 Bihār-ul-Anwār, vol. 73, p. 141, tradition 17.

2 Bihār-ul-Anwār, vol. 73, p. 142.

3 Ibid. p. 137 tradition 3.

Supplication:

O Lord! Save us from the negligence originating from wealth, position, and lusts.

O Lord! Make us free from the mastership of Satan over us and from being the slaves of coins; gold or silver.

O Lord! Hell-fire is shattering so that it is impossible to be free from it, but with your Grace. Bestow Your Grace on us.

Amin, O Cherisher of the Worlds.

The End
Sura Humazah
(The Slanderer)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Fil
(The Elephant)

No. 105 (5 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

This Sura, as its name indicates, refers to the well-known historical event that happened in the year of the birth of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), when *Allah* protected the Ka'ba against the attack of the army of pagans who, riding on the backs of elephants, came from Yemen intending to destroy it.

This Sura is a recollection of the miraculous event which many people of Mecca remember, because it happened not so long ago.

Its remembrance is a warning against the proud, arrogant pagans to make them aware that they have no power to stand in the way of the Power of *Allah*, Who destroyed that great army of elephants by little, tiny birds who pelted them with small '*stones of petrified clay*', and He can punish these stubborn oppressors, too.

Their equipment was no more than that of Abrahah nor did the number of their fighters match his. In other words, they had seen that event with their own eyes and, yet, were so arrogant.

The Virtue in Studying Sura Fīl:

On the virtue of reciting this Sura, a tradition from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) says: *"He who recites Sura Fīl in his obligatory prayers, any level land, mountains or any clods of dirt will bear witness for him, on the Day of Judgement, that he has been one of the prayerful (believers). And, on that Day, a herald calls saying: 'You are right about My servant. I accept your witness for him or against him. Let him enter Paradise without Reckoning him. Verily, he is the one of whom he and his action I like.'"* [1]

It is obvious that these magnificent, abundant bounties and rewards are for he who, with its recitation, gets down from the horse of arrogance and goes on the right path alongside which he seeks the satisfaction of *Allah*.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 539.

Sura Fīl

(The Elephant)

No. 105 (verses 1-5)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحٰبِ ٱلْفِيلِ

٢ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِى تَضْلِيلٍ

٣ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ

٤ تَرْمِيهِم بِحِجَارَةٍ مِن سِجِّيلٍ

٥ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?"

2. "Did He not make their stratagem go awry?"

3. "And He sent upon them birds in flocks,"

4. "Pelting them with stones of petrified clay,"

5. "Thus He made them like straw eaten up."

The Occasion of Revelation:

Ali-ibn-al-Hosain (*p.b.u.h.*) says in a tradition: *"Abū-Ṭaleb always defended, with his sword, the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.), in the wars."* He continued and said: *"(One day) Abū-Ṭaleb said: 'O my nephew, are you appointed for all peoples, entirely, or only for your own people in particular?' The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said that he had been appointed for all the human beings, entirely, whether they are white or black, Arab or*

non-Arab, and by Him in Whose hand was his soul, he was (appointed) to invite to the portent (the religion), all peoples, either white or black whether they were on the tops of the mountains or in the depths of the seas, and he was (appointed) to invite (the speakers of all) languages in Persia (Iran) and Rome".

"Then, the Quraish, (hearing that), became astonished and considered it great and said: 'Do you not hearken to your nephew and what he says? By Allah, if Persians and Romans hear this, they will snatch us from our land and surely they will break the Ka'ba into pieces of stone'. Hence, Allah sent down this verse: "They say: 'If we were to follow the guidance with thee, we should be snatched away from our land'. Have We not established for them a secure santuary, to which are brought as tribute fruits of all kinds..." (**Sura Qaṣaṣ, No. 28, verse 57** *). And for the phrase that they said: 'They break the Ka'ba into pieces of stone', He sent down* **Sura Fīl** *(in order to tell them that no one could accomplish such an action)".*

The Story of the Companions of the Elephants:

Commentators and historians have cited this story differently and they are divided as to when it had happened. But, the story, on the whole, is so well-known that it is counted in the line of widely transmitted chains of narrations. Here is a summary of it according to what is mentioned in '*Sīrah*' by Ibn-i-Hushām, Bulūq-ul-Irab, Biḥār-ul-Anwār, and Majma'-al-Bayān.

Zū-Nuwās, the king of Yemen, persecuted the Christians of Najran, who lived there, in order to force them to leave their Faith. (The Qur'an has pointed out with the terms of / aṣḥāb-i-uxdūd / '*the makers of the pit of Fire*' in **Sura Burūj, No. 85**. The story of that persecution is mentioned in Volume 1 of this commentary, pages 295-296.)

After that terrible massacre, a man by the name of 'Dūs' was able to escape and went for refuge to the Caesar of Rome, who was Christian, and described to him the event.

Since there was a long distance between Rome and Yemen, Caesar wrote a letter to Najāshī, the king of Yemen, advising him to take revenge on the murder and sent the letter by the man, himself.

Najāshī prepared an army of about seventy thousand men

and sent them to Yemen under the leadership of 'Irbāt'. Abrahah was also one of the commanders of that army.

The army invaded Yemen and before long defeated Zū-Nuwās, and ' Irbāt ' became the ruler of Yemen. But, after a short time, Abrahah rose against him and killing him, substituted Irbāt.

The news reached Najāshī who decided to punish Abrahah. Abrahah shaved the hair of his head and with some soil of Yemen sent this to Najāshī as a sign of complete submission and loyalty.

When Najāshī understood the situation, he forgave him and retained him in his position.

Then, to show his good behaviour and gratification, Abrahah had built a great, beautiful, splendid church unsurpassed in the world at that time. After that he introduced it as 'Ka'ba', to the people of Arabia, instead of the real Ka'ba and decided to make it the center for the Arab Hajj pilgrimage and to transfer the great central place of gatherings of Mecca to that place.

For this purpose, he sent many preachers to different places and among the Arab tribes in Arabia. But, Arabs, who intensely loved Mecca and the Ka'ba and knew it as the greatest sign of Prophet Abraham, the Khalīl (a.s.), felt danger.

According to some narrations, a group of people hiddenly burnt the church, and according to some other narrations some people hiddenly desecrated it and thus they showed their intense reaction against that vast invitation and discredited Abrahah's church.

Abrahah became very angry and decided to destroy the Ka'ba, totally, both in order to take revenge, and to attract Arabs to the new temple. He set out to invade Mecca with an army which consisted of soldiers and elephants.

Approaching the outskirts of Mecca, Abrahah's men captured 200 camels belonging to Abdūl-Muttalib, the grandfather of the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***).

Abrahah sent a man to Mecca to find the supreme chief of Mecca and tell him of his intentions of destroying the Holy Ka'ba and to inform the authorities that if they did not stand against him he would not kill anyone.

The man arrived in Mecca and looked for the chief of the city. Everyone showed Abdūl-Muttalib to him and he gave him the message.

Abdūl-Muttalib said that they were not in a position to fight with them and the Ka'ba would be protected by *Allah*, Himself.

The man told Abdūl-Muttalib that he should accompany him to see Abrahah. When Abdūl-Muttalib approached the military camp he was received, respectfully, and Abrahah gave him an honourable seat near him and then he asked him about the purpose of his visit. Abdūl-Muttalib said that he had come to complain to Abrahah about the two hundred camels that Abrahah's men had taken away and to request him to return his animals to him.

Abrahah was taken aback when Abdūl-Muttalib spoke like this. The conversation between the two is reported thus: "***What? I have come to destroy your place of worship, the Ka'ba, and you, instead of pleading to save the Holy House, speak of your camels!***" Abdūl-Muttalib replied: "***The camels belong to me and I, as the owner of the camels, have come for them. The Ka'ba belongs to Allah and it is the concern of the Owner of the Ka'ba to save it or to leave it to its fate in your hands***". (This statement shook Abrahah and he ordered that the camels be returned to Abdūl-Muttalib).

Abdūl-Muttalib returned to Mecca and advised the citizens to take refuge in the mountains around the city so as to be safe from being hurt by the invaders and he, himself, with a group of men went beside the Ka'ba to pray to *Allah* and ask for help.

O Lord! I hope not against them save Thee.
O Lord! Withdraw Thou therefore Thy protection from them.
O Lord! Verily he who is the enemy of this House is Thine enemy.
Verily, they have not defeated Thy forces.

Then, Abdūl-Muttalib went to the valleys around Mecca with a group of the Quraish and sent one of his sons over Abū-Qubays mountain to see what was happening. He returned and said that he had seen a black cloud coming from the Red Sea. Abdūl-Muttalib became happy with that news and said: "***O citizens of Quraish! Return to your houses because Allah has sent you His help***".

This was the scene on one side. On the other side, when Abrahah, riding on his elephant by the name of 'Mahmood' and intending to destroy the Ka'ba, entered the city, a huge flock of tiny birds, like a cloud, appeared in the sky; each bird with three small stones, as small as a pea, carrying one in its tiny beak and two in its

claws. They dropped them on the invading soldiers and they were killed at once.

Abrahah tried to go forth on elephant-back, but the animal did not move until it turned its head and moved swiftly toward Yemen, and there Abrahah, too, died in San'ā, the capital of Yemen.

Ideas are divided as to the number of elephants that Abrahah had brought with himself in that invasion. Some have mentioned only one, Mahmood; some others have cited eight elephants; some ten; and some have considered them twelve elephants.

In the same year, the holy Prophet was born and brightened the world with the light of his being. Some believe that there is a relation between these two happenings.

At any rate, this miraculous event was so important that that year was called / 'āmulfīl / '*the year of the elephant*' and was known as a beginning date in the history of Arabs.

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Commentary:

In the first verse, of this Sura, the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) is addressed and questioned:

"Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant"?

They had come, with that massive army and power, to destroy the Ka'ba when *Allah*, with an apparently very small army; tiny birds and small stones, destroyed it to show them that no power, even with those strong elephants, can prevail over the plan of *Allah*, and made Man's weakness, in that case, manifest.

The pharse ***'Have you not seen'*** refers to the occurence of the event which was very close to the time of the birth of the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) though he was not born yet, or at his birth time. Besides, the happening was so well-known and famous as if the Prophet had seen it with his own eyes, and, of course, some people of his time like Abdūl-Muttalib had witnessed it.

The term '***the companions of the elephant***' [1] , used in the verse, refers to the few elephants that were brought from Yemen both to scare

1 The word 'elephant' is used, here, in the singular, but, it has the meaning of the plural form.

the Arab defenders and their horses and camels, on the battlefield.

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"Did He not make their stratagem go awry?"

They intended to destroy the Ka'ba hoping that they would make the new established church, in Yemen, the Center for all Arabs of Arabia. But, they not only did not succeed in discrediting and destroying the Ka'ba, but it increased the fame and importance of the Holy Ka'ba and Mecca throughout Arabia, and attracted more loving thoughts and eager hearts to Mecca than ever before; it proved to be a location of security and of sanctuary; better and more wide spread.

The purpose of using the term / taḍlīl / which means '*to lead astray*' is that '*they never succeeded*'.

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Then, describing the details of the happening, it says:

"And He sent upon them birds in flocks".

The term / abābīl /, inspite of what is known among people, is not the name of that kind of bird, but, it has an adjectival sense. Some have considered it with the meaning of '*separate groups*', i.e. the mentioned birds came from all sides in '*separate groups*' towards '*the army which had elephants*'.

However, the term /tayr/, here, has the plural meaning and these two terms, / tayr / and / abābīl /, both mean '*birds in a flock*'.

What kind of birds were those birds? As it was mentioned in the description of the story, it is commonly known that some birds, like swallows, appeared from the side of the Red Sea as hosts above the head of that army of Abrahah.

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"Pelting them with stones of petrified clay".

Further, in the description of the event which has been compiled from history, commentaries, and Islamic narrations, it was said that each of these small birds had three tiny stones with them as small as a pea, or smaller than that of which one was carried in its tiny beak and two in its claws. Any one of these small stones would immediately kill anyone on whom it was dropped.

"Thus He made them like straw eaten up"

The term / ʿaṣf / means *'leaves and stalks of corn or plants of which the grain has been eaten by cattle'*; in other words, it means *'straw'*.

The phrase / maʿkūl / *'eaten up'* indicates that this straw has been ground and smashed, completely, by the teeth of the animal, then, in the stomach of the animal, it has been ground for the third time. This meaning shows that the small stones would smash the one upon whom it would fall.

This idea, besides being an evidence for the intense action of crushing, points to the weakness and unworthiness of that tyrant, arrogant group who were apparently forceful.

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Explanation:

This House Has An Owner.

It is interesting that as a means of waking Man up, the Holy Qur'an tells this long story in a few short sentences which are extremely eloquent and expressive, and illustrates the weakness of arrogant Man compared to the great Power of *Allah*.

This happening shows that it does not necessarily need, as some people think, miracles to occur by the intercession of the Prophet or sinless Imams (***p.b.u.th.***) but in any condition that *Allah* wishes or necessitates, He does it. The purpose is that people may become acquainted with the greatness of *Allah* and the legitimacy of His religion.

This miraculous punishment has a clear difference with the miracles that happened for the punishment of other disobedient nations such as in Noah's Flood, a shower of stones for Lot's people, the storm for ʿĀd's people, and lightning for Thamood's people. They were a series of natural happenings which were miracles only in those special circumstances, but the story of Abrahah and the birds pelting his army with little stones from their beaks and claws is not something like a natural event.

The raising up of these little birds, coming towards that army, carrying the little stones, their accurately pelting exactly upon the

soldiers of Abrahah, and destroying a very large army simply with some little stones is something extraordinary, but we know that they are naught compared with the Power of *Allah*.

Allah, who has put the power of the atom inside the very little stones which produces a great explosion when it is released, can easily charge them with a property that makes the bodies of Abrahah's army like '***straw eaten up***'; and there is no need of saying, as some Egytian commentators did to justify the event as a natural occurence, that the stones were poisoned with some microbes of plague, typhoid fever, small pox, or some other justifications. The thing that we can say is that the stones contained such a surprising effect which destroyed the bodies, and we know no more, but, in any event, there is nothing difficult for the Power of *Allah* to perform.

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The Gravest Punishment by the Least Means!

It is noteworthy that *Allah* has shown the oppressors His Power in the most suprizing ways.

There may be no divine punishment, in the world, more grievous than the punishment of Abrahah's army where a great many forces were so destroyed that they changed into a state of '***straw eaten up***' and that they were destroyed by the means of tiny clay-stones carried by some little birds which is, itself, astonishing to all the arrogant, tyrant, oppressors of the world, and is a sign for them to know how weak they are when the Power of *Allah* works.

Still, sometimes *Allah* gives these grand missions to some smaller agents to perform. For example, He commissions a microbe, which is never visible to the naked eye, to increase into a very large, massive number through reproduction, in a very short time. Then, they infect the strong members of a society or societies with a dangerous, contagious disease, like a plague, during a short length of time which destroys them all, rapidly. This is the Power of *Allah* when He wills.

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The Purposes of the Story of the 'Elephant'.

The Sura after this one, Sura Quraish, illustrates, well, that one of the purposes of Sura Fil is the remembrance of the splendid blessings of

Allah for the Quraish tribe to show them that had it not been for the Grace of *Allah* neither any trace of this sacred center, i.e. Mecca and Ka'ba, would remain nor of the Quraish tribe, themselves, in order that they might reduce their pride and arrogance and accept the invitation of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*).

On the other hand, this event, which was nearly close to the time of the birth of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), in fact, paved the way for that great advent, and was the messenger of the importance of that rising. This is the same thing that is called / irhās / '***indication***' by commentators.

And, again, on the other hand, it is a warning to all arrogant ones in the world, whether they are from the Quraish or not, to know that they can never stand against the Power of *Allah*; they should submit to His Command and accept the right and justice.

And, further, it refers to the importance of the Holy House, the Ka'ba, that when the enemies plotted to destroy it and decided to transport its center of importance, which had a background from Abraham's (a.s.) time, to another land, *Allah* taught them such a lesson which serves as an example for all others and increased the importance and honour of that sacred center.

Moreover, Providence, Who accepted the supplication of Abraham, the Khalīl (a.s.), about the security of that sacred land and guaranteed it, proved in that event that the Will of ***Allah*** has designed this center of monotheism and worship to remain secure forever.

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A Certain Historial Event.

It is interesting to note that the story of '***Aṣḥāb-i-Fīl***', '***the companion of the Elephant***', was so well-known and certain, among Arabs, that it became the beginning point of the date in history for Arabs. And, as it was said before, the Holy Qur'an mentions it with the phrase /a lam tara/ '***Have you not seen?***' and, also, addressing the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) who was not present at the event and did not see it, which is another sign of the certainty of that happening being sure.

Besides, when the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) recited these verses for the pagans of Mecca no one denied it. If it were a doubtful matter, at

least a group of people would reject it and that rejection, like their other rejections, would be recorded in history, especially since the Qur'an has stated the matter with the phrase / a lam tara/, '*Have you not seen*?'.

By the way, the splendor of this Sacred House is evidently proven with this certain historical miracle.

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Supplication:

O Lord! Grant us the success to protect this great Center of Monotheism.

O Lord! Cut off the hands of those who intend to keep only outward aspects of this Sacred Center and not to hearken to its real message from it.

O Lord! Sustain us, its Pilgrims, to visit it with complete acknowledgement.

The End
Sura Fīl
(The Elephant)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Quraish (Custodians of the Ka'ba)

No. 106 (4 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

This Meccan Sura is, indeed, the supplement to the preceding one; **Sura Fil**. The verses of the Sura are a clear evidence for this idea. They describe the blessings the Quraish tribe were given to enjoy; might they be thankful to Him and worship Him, the Lord of the Sacred House (Ka'ba) from which they obtained all their honour and high social status.

As was said at the beginning of **Sura Duhā**, which is considered one Sura with **Sura Inshirāh**, the same as **Sura Fil** is with **Sura Quraish**, the unity and similarity of the matters, in both of them (**Fil and Quraish**), are so much so that they can be taken as an evidence for the unity of **Sura Duhā and Sura Inshirāh**.

That is why both of them must be recited together, one set or the other, in one 'rak'at' of a prayer, as a complete Sura, if one chooses them in his obligatory prayers.

For more explanation on this subject, books of jurisprudence (chapters on prayers and recitation) are at your disposal.

The Virtue of Studying Sura Quraish:

On the virtue of reciting the Sura, a tradition is adequate to cite from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) who has been narrated to have said: ***"He who recites it is rewarded ten 'good deeds' as many as the number of those who perform the ritual circumambulation of the Ka'ba, and spiritual retreat in the Sacred Mosque".*** [1]

Assuredly such a virtue is of a person who humbly worships *Allah*, Who is the Lord of Ka'ba, and protects the nobility of the House and hearkens to the message of the shrine with the ear of his soul and practices it.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 543, and Atyab-ul-Bayān, vol. 14, p. 235.

Sura Quraish
(Custodians of the Ka'ba)

No. 106 (verses 1-4)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ لِإِيلَٰفِ قُرَيْشٍ

٢ إِيلَٰفِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَآءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

٣ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَٰذَا الْبَيْتِ

٤ الَّذِيَ أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَءَامَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. *"For stabilizing and unifying the Quraish,"*
2. *"(We maintain for them) their trading caravans by winter and summer,"*
3. *"So let them worship the Lord of this House (Ka'ba),"*
4. *"Who fed them against hunger and secured them from fear."*

Commentary:

In the previous Sura (Fil) the story of the destruction of the possessors of the elephant and Abrahah's army, who came to Mecca intending to destroy the Ka'ba and obliterate that Sacred House, was stated. In the first verse of this Sura which is, in fact, the supplement to it, followed to the idea that *'We destroyed the companions of the elephant and made them like straw eaten up'* before the advent of the Prophet of Islam (*p.b.u.h.*), it says:

"For stabilizing and unifying the Quraish"

The term /ilāf/ is an infinitive which means '*uniting together*', and the term /ulfat/ means '*a gathering with intimacy and union*'. Some have construed /ilāf/, deriving from another root, to mean '*agreement, compact*' which is not appropriate with the content of the Sura. So, the purpose

of using it is for the familiarity and union amongst the Quraish tribe who, together with all the citizens of Mecca, had settled there because of the honour, importance and security of the Holy Ka'ba for which, every year, many people from Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula came to that city for pilgrimage, also taking profit from some commercial and literacy exchanges. All of them were obtained under the existence of that pecular security.

If the army of Abrahah, and the like, could have disturbed the security or were successful in destroying the Ka'ba, no other people would become familiar with the region.

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"*(We maintain for them) their trading caravans by winter and summer.*"

The purpose of the unifying and familiarity of the Quraish may be due to their love for their sacred land. The political and economical importance of the Holy Shrine (Ka'ba), for the Quraish, then secure from the invasions of the hostile tribes in the Arabian Peninsula thus made them monopolize the trade of the area from the North to the South and vice-versa.

In the summer, they used to go to Syria which had moderate weather and in winter to Yemen where they enjoyed a warm climate, for the purposes of trade, and it was by *Allah's* Grace that they travelled safe and undisturbed on their journeys, otherwise, the routes were not safe and none could travel without being plundered and suffering death and destruction or suffering heavy losses. (Of course, for the same love, they did not leave Mecca to settle in these places).

It was the position of the Quraish with regard to their connection with their services to the Holy Ka'ba that they received, by the Will of *Allah*, the security and honour from the people. He planned to keep them safe, by His Grace, for the advent of Islam and the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) to emerge from that tribe and in that sacred land.

But, the same tribe, the Quraish, whose protection, safety and honour was due to the Holy Ka'ba being in their city and they being its guardians, later became the prime enemies of Islam. At the beginning, the main cause of their opposition, to the advent of Islam, was the fear of losing their supremacy in the political and economical fields; and later, vices in different forms were committed by the Ommayyid and

Abbaside Kalifs who were of the Quraish tribe, for other worldly motives. They were so hideous that history will never forget them, although all of whatever they had, were from Islam; the command of *Allah*.

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"So let them worship the Lord of this House (Ka'ba)".

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"Who fed them against hunger and secured them from fear".

When the Quraish had been granted such great blessings; security in trade for gaining profit and in life for being honoured, they should have gratefully worshipped the Lord of the Ka'ba, Who, inspite of their land being only a desert and thus unproductive, provides them with every kind of good food and the other provisions of life, through merchandise and the pilgrimage, which is brought to their very door. And *Allah* had protected them from the most formidable enemy, Abrahah.

This was an open admonition to the Quraish who, at the start of the ministry of the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), had been the most persistent enemies of the apostle of *Allah* and the message of the Unity of the Lord which he preached. It was as well as a warning inviting their attention to the Mighty power of *Allah* Who could also destroy them and humiliate them as He did with their mighty foe, Abrahah.

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Supplication:

O Lord! Give us the success of worshipping You, being grateful for the blessings, and guarding this Great House.

O Lord! Increase the glory and respect of this important Islamic Center every day, and set it as a link for the connection between the Muslims in the world.

O Lord! Cut off the hands of all wicked enemies from it and banish away all those who abuse this great center.

The End

Sura Quraish

(Custodians of the Ka'ba)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Mā'ūn (Neighborly Needs)

No. 107 (7 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

Many commentators believe that this Sura was revealed at Mecca. The tone of the verses, which are short and awakening about the Hereafter, and the deeds of the deniers of the Judgement Day, attests to this idea.

On the whole, the deeds and characteristics of the deniers of the Hereafter are stated in five references. Consequently, they deny the Final Judgement, repulse giving charity on the path of *Allah*, or helping the orphan and the indigent. They are heedless of their prayers, by saying them only hypocritically, and refuse to supply even neighborly needs.

Occasion of the Revelation:

On the occasion of the Sura's revelation, some have said that it was revealed about Abū-Sufyān who used to slaughter two big camels every day from which he and his men ate. But, one day it happened that an orphan came to his door and asked for some help. Abū-Sufyān beat him with his stick and repulsed him.

Some others have said that the verse was revealed about Walīd - ibn - i - Muqayrah or 'Ās - ibn - i - Wā'il.

The Virtue of Studying the Sura:

On the virtue of the recitation of the Sura, a tradition narrated from Imam Bāqir (*p.b.u.h.*) says: ***"He who recites it (Sura Mā'ūn) in his obligatory and optional*** (نافلة)[1] ***prayers, Allah accepts his prayers and his fasting, and does not count the (evil) acts he committed in this world."*** [2]

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1 'Supererogatory' has been used for this type of prayer, however, since this word, also, means something depreciative or offensive, 'optional' was preferred as it is optional.

2 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 546.

Sura Mā'ūn
(Neighborly Needs)

No. 107 (verses 1-7)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ أَرَءَيْتَ ٱلَّذِى يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ
٢ فَذَٰلِكَ ٱلَّذِى يَدُعُّ ٱلْيَتِيمَ
٣ وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ ٱلْمِسْكِينِ
٤ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ
٥ ٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ عَن صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ
٦ ٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآءُونَ
٧ وَيَمْنَعُونَ ٱلْمَاعُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Have you seen him who denies the Final Judgement?"

2. "Then such is the man who repulses the orphan (with harshness),"

3. "And encourages not the feeding of the indigent."

4. "So woe to those praying ones,"

5. "Who are careless of their prayers,"

6. "Those who (want but) to be seen (of men),"

7. "But refuse (to supply) (even) neighborly needs."

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Commentary:

The Harmful Fruit of the Denial of the Hereafter.

In this Sura, at first, the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) is addressed and some unfortunate reflections of the denial of the Hereafter, in the deeds of the rejectors, are expressed.

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"Have you seen him who denies the Final Judgement?"

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"Then such is the man who repulses the orphan (with harshness),"

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"And encourages not the feeding of the indigent."

The purpose of using the term / dīn /, in this verse, is for the Day of the Final Judgement; its denial as well as the Great Court, therein, which has a very bad effect on the acts of the rejectors of it. In this Sura, five effects out of these effects, such as, repulsing the orphan with harshness, and the lack of encouraging others to the feeding of the indigent, are referred to.

Some have said that / dīn /, here, may mean the Qur'an or the religion, Islam, but the first meaning seems more appropriate. Similar to this sense is seen in **Sura Infitār, No. 82, verse 9**: ***"Nay, but you disbelieve in the (day of) reckoning,"*** and, also in **Sura Tīn, No. 95, verse 7:** ***"What then makes you reject thereafter the last Judgement?"*** that, taking into consideration other verses of these Suras, the purpose of using the word / dīn / is for 'the Day of Judgement'.

The term /yadu"/ is based on /da"a/ with the meaning of '***to push, drive away with violence***'; and the term / yaḥudd / is derived from / ḥadda/ which means '***to urge, prompt***'. Rāqib cites in his book, Mufradāt, that '***/ḥass/ is an urging in movement and travelling, but / ḥadd / is not so***'.

At any rate, since these two terms are used in the future tense, the case indicates the continuity of their action, in regard to the orphan and the indigent.

Again. the substantial point, here, is that when we are dealing with the orphan, affection and humane treatment is more significant than food, because an orphan must tolerate the lack of affection and spiritual feeding rather than the bodily food which is in the secondary

stage. Of course, feeding the needy, mentioned in these verses, is one of the most important good actions, so that, if we cannot feed a needy one we must encourage others to do so.

Those who lack Faith in the Resurrection and the Reckoning in that Great Court and receiving reward and punishment dare to commit sin and, therefore, all kinds of vice can be seen in their behaviour.

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"So woe to those praying ones,"

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"Who are careless of their prayers."

They neither consider any value for their prescribed daily canonical prayers, nor lay stress on its proper time, nor observe its conditions and rites.

The term / sāhūn / is derived from /sahw/ which originally means '***a mistake which is done unintentionally or neglectfully***' whether one is guilty in its preparation or not. In the first case, one is not excused, but in the second case one is. Here, the purpose is negligence with guilt.

We should note that it does not say '***they make mistakes unintentionally in their prayer***' which happens, in any case, for everyone, but, it says that they are careless of their essential prayers, totally.

It is clear that if it happens once or occasionally, it may be of negligence, but he who always forgets his prayers and lets it be forgotten, it is obvious that he does not take it seriously or he has no fear of people, or the like.

In addition to what was said, there are some other commentaries cited on the purpose of /sāhūn/ mentioned in this verse. Among them are regarding those who do not offer the daily prayers, punctually, and let the exact time for the prayers elapse, to pass their time away in idleness or in worldly business and enjoyments.

Or, those who pray to show their prayerfulness and would-be piety to the public, but, do not do it when they are alone. (This idea is mentioned in the next verse).

Of course, all these meanings can be combined,whereas,the first commentary seems more fitting.

In any case, when these kind of neglectful, praying ones deserve the wrath of *Allah*, what can be the state of those who never pray?

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"Those who (want but) to be seen (of men),"

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"But refuse (to supply) (even) neighborly needs".

It is certain that one of the headsprings of pretense and hypocrisy is the lack of Faith in the Day of Judgement and disbelief in the divine recompense, otherwise, how can a person leave the rewards of *Allah* and pay attention to the mere pleasure of people?

The term / mā'ūn / is based on /ma'n/ with the meaning of '*a little thing*'. Many commentators believe that the purpose of it, here, is for things of insignificant price that people, especially neighbors, take from each other; things like salt, water, matches for fire, dishes, and the like, which are the necessities of life.

It is self-evident that a person who withholds giving such insignificant things to others is a very miserly, faithless one. These things do not cost too much, but, they are sometimes very helpful, so when they refuse to give them this produces some notable difficulties in the lives of people.

Some believe that the purpose of / mā'ūn / is poor-rate, alms, because alms, in comparison with total wealth, is often a little.

The occurence of these two things (hypocrisy and refusing to supply neighborly needs), being cited together, refers to the idea that whatever is for *Allah*, they do to show people, and whatever is for people, they refuse to give them, and thus, they pay no right to its owner.

We conclude this subject with a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) who is reported to have said: ***"The person who refuses to supply his neighborly needs, on the Day of Judgement Allah will refuse to give him His goodness and leaves him to himself, and what a bad case it is for the one whom He leaves to himself."*** [1]

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1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 679.

Explanation:

Subjects Discussed in this Sura:

A collection of low qualities are under discussion, in this short Sura, which are the signs of infidelity and meanness in anyone who possesses them. It is interesting that all of them are subdivisions to the rejection of the Hereafter; that is, the Recompense or the Day of Retribution.

The qualities of despising the orphan, refusing to feed the needy, being heedless of the prescribed prayers, hypocrisy, not being cooperative with people even in giving them insignificant materials, form this collection. Thus, it illustrates the miserly, self-conceit and showy persons who have neither connection with people nor join with the Creator. They carry no light of Faith and responsibility in their entity. They neither think of the divine rewards nor are they in fear of His punishment.

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A Great Social Pest; Pretense and Hypocrisy.

The value of any action depends upon the motive of that action. In other words, from the viewpoint of Islam, the basis of every action is formed by intention; '*pure*' intention, of course.

In Islam, actions, before anything else, are judged by their motives. It is one of the fundamental principles of law in all ages and environments that motives and intentions are the criterions by which actions of men are judged.

So, actions are held to be good or bad, just or unjust, criminal or innocent according to the motives, in order to define them as good or bad, just or unjust, criminal or innocent. If a man gives away something in charity with the intention of seeking the satisfaction of *Allah*, he will certainly be rewarded by *Allah*; but if he does it to become prominent, in the public eye or hypocritically, for show, he may be able to attain that object, but with no benefit in the Next World which is the goal in a Muslim's life, (see **42:20**).

There is a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) who is narrated to have said: ***"Actions are to be judged by intentions. There is surely for man what he intends. So, whosoever fights for Allah in the Holy War his reward is with Allah, the Almighty, the Glorious; and whosoever's***

fight is for this world which he seeks or even for a hobble rope (of a camel) to gain, he may have only that (and no more)". [1]

Islamic traditions and narrations on the criticizing of hypocrisy are many; among which are the following:

1. A tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) says: *"There will come a time for people when their inward aspects are filthy, and their outward appearances seem charming. This is because of their greed, in this world, and not in gaining the rewards with Allah. Their religion will be hypocrisy. They do not have the fear of Allah, and He will punish them with a grevious chastisement. Then, whenever they call on Allah, like (the behavior of) a drowned person, their supplication will never be accepted".* [2]

2. Another tradition from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) says that he told one of his companions, by the name of / zurārah /: *"O Zurārah, anyone whose actions are for the sake of people, the reward is for the people (to give it). Every hypocrisy is polytheism".* [3]

3. The holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) has been narrated to have said in a tradition: *"On the Day of Judgement, the hypocrite will be called by four names: O' pagan, O' sinner, O' treacherous, and O' loser; your deed was of no avail, and your recompense was cancelled; there is no rescue for you today; ask your recompense from the one for whom you used to act".* [4]

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1 Wasā'il-ush-Shī'ah, vol. 1, p. 35, tradition 10.

2 Usūl-i-Kāfī, vol. 2, Chapter 'Hypocrisy', tradition 14.

3 Wasā'il-ush-Shī'ah, vol. 1, p. 49, tradition 11.

4 Ibid, p. 51, tradition 16.

Supplication:

O Lord! Purity in intention is very difficult; help us on this path, Yourself.

O Lord! We seek from You such a Faith that will cause us to think that but for Your recompense and punishment on Your Way, the pleasure or hatred of people will be indifferent for us.

O Lord! Forgive us whatever sin we have committed on this path.

The End

Sura Mā'ūn

(Neighborly Needs)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Kaûthar (The Abundance)

No. 108 (3 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

This Sura is known as a Meccan Sura, but some believe that it may be Medinan. Some others have said that this Sura might have been revealed twice; once in Mecca and once in Medina, but the narrations cited on the occasion of its revelation attest to the first idea which says it is Meccan.

Occasion of Revelation:

The following is a story told about the occasion of the revelation of Sura Kaûthar: 'Ās-ibn-Wā'il, who was one of the chiefs of the pagans, met the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) coming out of the Sacred Mosque. He spoke with him (***p.b.u.h.***) for awhile. In the meantime, a group of authoritative men of the Quraish were sitting in the Mosque watching him from a distance. When 'Ās-ibn-Wā'il entered the Mosque they asked him: "***To whom were you speaking?***" He answered: "***With this abtar one***".

He used this word for the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) to taunt him, because he (***p.b.u.h.***) had two sons born of Lady Khadijah; Ghasem and Taher (also called 'Abdullah) who died in Mecca and so, there was no live male issue from the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***). Henceafter, the Qur'an applied this name to the enemies of the Prophet. [1]

The Arabs used to call the one who had no son /abtar/, and '***abtar***' means '***the animal whose tail is cut off***'. So, the n. it means the one whose succession in his seed has ceased, i.e., the one who has none to inherit

1 The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) had another son by the name of Abraham, born of Māriyah Qibtiyyah in 8-A.H. He, too, died before he was 2 years old.

him. To console the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*),this Sura was revealed with the glad tidings of the greatest amount or the highest degree of the grace of *Allah*, bestowed on him.

Those people traditionally considered the male child extraordinarily valuable and thought of him as a substitute for the father. They happily imagined that with the demise of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) his program would cease because he had no son to substitute him to continue it.

The revelation of this Sura was, in fact, an answer to the enemies of the Apostle to inform them that Islam and the Qur'an would remain and ceaslessly continue, forever.

The Virtue of Studying the Sura:

On the virtue of the recitation of this Sura, a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) says: ***"He who recites it (Sura Kaùthar) Allah will quench his thirst from the streams of Heaven and will recompense him good rewards as many as the number of every sacrifice which the servants of Allah make on the day of the Feast of Sacrifice, together with those sacrifices which are of the People of the Book and the pagans."*** [1]

The name of this Sura, Kaùthar, is taken from the first verse of the Sura.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 548.

Sura Kaùthar
(The Abundance)

No. 108 (verses 1-3)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ إِنَّآ أَعْطَيْنَـٰكَ ٱلْكَوْثَرَ

٢ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَٱنْحَرْ

٣ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ ٱلْأَبْتَرُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Surely (O Mohammad) We have given you abundance of good (Kaùthar)."

2. "Therefore to your Lord turn in Prayer and Sacrifice."

3. "Surely your enemy is the one who will be without offspring."

Commentary:

In this Sura, similar to Sura Ḍuhā and Sura Inshirāḥ, the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) is addressed. One of the objective points in all three Suras is that of consoling him when he was faced with a magnitude of painful incidents and numerous taunts by the offensive language of his enemies.

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"Surely (O Mohammad) We have given you abundance of good (Kaùthar)."

The term /kauθar/ is a descriptive case derived from /kaθrat/ with the meaning of '***a lot of goodness, or blessing***'; while gracious persons are also called '***Kaùthar***'.

What is the purpose of using the term '***Kaùthar***', here? A narration says that when the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) sat on the pulpit and recited this Sura, some of the companions asked him what it was that *Allah* had given him and he answered: ***"It is a stream in Heaven, whiter than milk, more clear than a goblet (of crystal) with dome-shaped ornaments from pearls and rubies..."*** [1]

Another tradition from Imam Sādiq (***p.b.u.h.***) says: ***"Kaùthar is a stream in Heaven that Allah granted His Apostle for his son (who died in his lifetime)".***

Some have also said the purpose of using the word '***Kaùthar***' is for the ***Pool of Abundance*** (ḥaud - i - kaùthar) that belongs to the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) wherefrom the believers quench their thirst when arriving in Paradise." [2]

Some have commented on it as being '***prophecy***' and some others as '***the Qur'an***'; still others as '***abundance of the Prophet's companions and followers***', or the '***abundance of the descendants***' all of whom came from his daughter, Fātimah Zahrā (***p.b.u.h.***), and they multiplied to such an extent that it is impossible to count them. They are not only, now, but, until the advent of the Hereafter, the reminders of the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***). Some have also commented on it as being '***intercession***', narrating a tradition from Imam Sādiq (***p.b.u.h.***) in this connection, as a reference.

Even, Fakhr - i - Rāzī has narrated fifteen different narrations on the meaning of '***Kaùthar***'. But, it seems that most of them are the statements of the clear examples of this broad concept, because, as was mentioned before, '***Kaùthar***' means '***goodness and blessing in abundance***', and we know that *Allah*, the Graceful, granted the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) so many blessings so that each of those mentioned in the above is one clear example of them. There are also many other examples that may be cited as example commentaries for the verse.

However, all the divine gifts granted to the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) in all aspects, even the victories in his expeditions against his enemies, and the scholars of his followers in the Muslim community, who guard the burning torch of Islam and Qur'an, in every period and age, and

1. Majma' al-Bayān vol. 10, p. 549.
2. Ibid.

carry it throughout the world, all in all are involved in this '***abundance of good***'.

It should not be forgotten that *Allah* revealed these verses to His Prophet's holy heart at the time when the manifestations of this '***abundance of good***' had not yet appeared. It was a miraculous piece of news which informed about the near future and the remote future regarding the legitimacy of the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***).

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This great blessing and the'***abundance of good***' needs a lofty thankfulness, although creatures can never thank the Creator for His blessings, fully, because even the success of being thankful is another blessing from Him which needs thankfulness. When it is so;

"***Therefore to your Lord turn in Prayer and Sacrifice***".

Yes, He is the One Who grants these blessings, therefore, prayer, worship and sacrifice, which is also a kind of worship, itself, have no meaning save for *Allah*, particularly in regard to the meaning of the term Lord which indicates the constancy of grace, providence and Lordship of Providence.

Briefly, '***worship***', in the form of prayer or making a sacrifice, is only the Lord's and Benefactor's privilege, and it is exclusively for the Pure Supreme Being.

This refers to the behaviour of the pagans who used to prostrate and sacrifice to the idols while they knew their affluence belonged to *Allah*. And, in any case, the phrase '***your Lord***', used in the verse, is a clear evidence for the necessity of '***intention with divine motive***' in worship.

Many commentators believe that the purpose, involved here, refers to the prayer on the Feast of Sacrifice, and making sacrifice on the same day. But, the meaning of the verse is apparently general and inclusive, even though prayer and sacrifice of the Feast on the day are of its clear examples.

Perhaps, using the term / wanḥar / based on / naḥr /, which is specific to butchering a camel, is for the reason that sacrificing a camel, amongst other offerings, enjoyed a higher importance for the Muslims of that time who liked it very much, and thus, its butchering was not possible without the showing of generosity.

Here are two more commentaries on the above verse:

1. The implied meaning of the phrase / wanḥar / is *'facing Qiblah (the direction of the Ka'ba) when saying a prayer'*, because the word /naḥr/ originally means '*throat*' then, it has been used with the meaning of '*standing in front of anything*'.

2. The purpose involved, here, is the '*raising of the hands up to the throat and face*'. A tradition says that when this Sura was revealed, the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) asked Gabriel: *"What is this /nuḥayrah/ that my Lord has commissioned me to do"?*

Gabriel said: *"This is not /nuḥayrah/. Allah has, however, commanded you to raise your hands at the beginning of prayer when you say /allāhu akbar/ and when you are going to perform bowing or prostration and after that, because our prayer and that of the angels, in the seven heavens, are like this. Everything has an adornment and the adornment of prayer is raising the hands at the time of saying /allāhu akbar/".* [1]

There is another tradition from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) who, on the commentary of this verse, indicating with his holy hands, said: *"The purpose is that you raise your hands so that your palms be towards Qiblah (the direction of the Ka'ba)".* [2]

There is no problem in combining all these meanings, in particular, there are many Islamic narrations about raising the hands at the time of saying /allāhu akbar/. Thus, the verse has such a vast meaning that it covers all of them. However, the first commentary is the most appropriate.

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In the last verse of this short Sura, regarding the taunts made by the chiefs of the pagans to that holy being, it says: *"Surely your enemy is the one who will be without offspring"*.

The term / šāni' / is derived from / šana'ān / with the meaning of ' *enmity, spitefulness, and peevishness* ' ; and / šāni' / is the one who possesses these characteristics.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 550.

2 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 550.

It is worthy to note that /abtar/ originally means *'the animal whose tail is cut off'* and the enemies of Islam taunted the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) by saying this with the hope that after his departure from this world and having no son to inherit his position, the dissolution of Islam's sovereignty would happen. But, Qur'an, consoling the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) tells him that it is not him who will be without offspring, but surely his enemy is.

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Explanation:

Lady Hazrat Fātimah (p.b.u.h.) and Kaùthar:

It was said earlier that '***Kaùthar***' has a vast inclusive meaning which is '*goodness in abundance*' and the examples are many. A large number of scholars of the Shi'ah school believe that one of the most clear examples of that word is the auspicious existence of Lady Fātimah Zahrā (*p.b.u.h.*), because the occasion of the revelation of the verse says that they accused the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) of being without offspring, but the Qur'an says: ***"Surely (O Mohammad) We have given you abundance of good (Kaùthar)"***.

From this meaning we understand that this '*abundance of good*' is the very Lady Fātimah Zahrā (*p.b.u.h.*) of whom the descendants of the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) increased abundantly and thousands and thousands of them scattered in the world preaching his religion and preserving it. It is a fact that none can correctly count the number of decendants of Hazrat Ali and Fātimah (*p.b.u.h.*) who are recognized as the decendants of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), among whom so many great scholars, scientists, writers, commentators, jurisprudents, traditionists and splendid leaders left some outstanding works and unmatched fame in this world, and tried to protect Islam with their donations and devotions.

Here, we encounter a very interesting discussion from Fakhr - i - Rāzī who, along with other commentaries on '*Kaùthar*', says: ***"The third statement is that this Sura has been revealed to reject those who criticized the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) for his lack of progeny, therefore, the meaning of the Sura is that Allah shall give him a generation which will remain stable through all ages. And consider this, that although a number of Ahlul-Bait have been martyred, the world is replete with them, where as from the Ummayads (who were the enemies of Islam) there remains no***

mentionable figure in the world. Then, behold and see how many of the great men of leadership such as Bāqir, Sādiq, Rida, and Nafs-i-Zakiyyah [1] ***...are found among them, (the household).***" [2]

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The Miracle of this Sura:

This Sura virtually contains three important miraculous predictions. On the one hand, it informs the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) of the glad tidings of the '***abundance of good***', (although the verb /a'taynā/ is in the past tense form, but it may be as the indisputable tense common to the present and future which has been stated in the form of the past tense) and this '***abundance of good***' encompasses all victories and successes that were obtained, later, by the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***); were not predictable in Mecca at the time of the revelation of this Sura.

On the other hand, the Sura foretells that the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) shall not be without posterity, and his generations and descendants shall exist abundantly in the world.

The third prediction of the Sura is that the enemies of the Prophet (***p.b.u.h***) will be '***abtar***', i.e., without posterity. This, too, actually happened and those enemies were so rooted out that no trace of their generations can be seen today. Tribes such as the Ummayads and Abbasids, who opposed the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) and his prophecy and who enjoyed such a population that their family and children could not be counted, today, of which there is not one of them to be introduced.

Allah and the Plural Pronoun:

It is noteworthy that, here, and in many other verses of the Holy Qur'an, *Allah* introduces Himself by the first person plural pronoun, thus: "***Surely We have given you abundance of good (Kaùthar)***".

This sense, and the likes of it, is for the expression of Glory and Power, because when the nobility talk about themselves, they announce not only themselves, but, also their commissionairs, and this refers to the power and nobility as well as to the presence of those in obedience along with the commands.

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1. Nafs-i-Zakiyyah is another name for Mohammad-ibn-Abdullah, the son of Imam Hassan Mujtabā (p.b.u.h.) who was martyred by Manṣur-i-Dawāniqī in 145 A.H.

2 Tafsīr-i-Fakhr-i-Rāzī, vol. 32, p. 124.

In the verse under discussion the term /an/ is also another emphasis on this meaning and the phrase /a'ṭaynāka/ '*We have given you*', rather than /ātaynāka/, is an evidence to the fact that He has awarded him /kaûthar/, which, itself, is a great glad tiding to the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) in order to keep his holy heart aloof from annoyance resulting from the nonsensical remarks of the enemies, and, consequently, languor does not affect his firm determination, and for him to know that *Allah* is his support Who is the source of all welfare and grace in abundance.

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Supplication:

O Lord! Do not deprive us from the blessings of that 'abundance of good' that You granted to Your Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

O Lord! You know that we heartily love Your Prophet and his pure progeny (p.b.u.th.); include us among them.

O Lord! The glory of his essence and his religion is much noteable; add to this grandeur, majesty and honour.

The End
Sura Kaûthar
(The Abundance)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Kāfirūn (Disbelievers)

No. 109 (6 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

This Sura was revealed in Mecca. Both the content and the occasion of revelation of the Sura clearly confirm this idea.

The statements of the Sura show that at the time of its revelation Muslims were in a minority and disbelievers were in the majority, of whom the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) was under great pressure. They urged him to collude with them, but, he refused all of them and, without having any conflict with them, made them completely hopeless.

This is a good example for all Muslims that under no conditions should they collude with the enemies of Islam against the basis of the religion, and if it happens that disbelievers ask them to follow such suggestions they should make them totally hopeless. The phrase "*I worship not what you worship*" is, in particular, repeated twice, in this Sura, for emphasis. This emphasis is made in order to disappoint the enemies. Again, the verse: "*Nor do you worship Whom I worship*" is also another emphasis showing their stubbornness which ends with the conclusion: "*To you be your religion, and to me my religion*".

The Virtue of Studying Sura Kāfirūn:

There are many narrations on the excellence of reciting this Sura which illustrate the extreme importance of its content.

For example, it is narrated in a tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) that he said: "*The person who recites (the Sura) 'Say: O you disbelievers' it is as if he has recited a quarter of the Qur'an, and the insolent Satans will recoil from him, and he will be free from polytheism,*

and he will be saved from the Great Terror (on Doomsday). [1]

Salvation, on the Day of Judgement, will be attained only through monotheism and the negation of polytheism; it is the theme on which this Sura is based.

A tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) says that he asked Jabīr-ibn-Maṭ'am whether he wished to have the best companions and the most amount of provisions with him when he was on a journey, and he said he did, then, the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) said: *"Recite these five Suras: Kāfirūn, Nasr, Ikhlās, Falaq and Nās, and begin your recitation with /bismillah-ir-raḥmān-ir-raḥīm."* [2]

In another tradition, Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) said: *"My father has said that Sura Kāfirūn is one fourth of the Qur'an, and when he recited it he used to say 'I worship only Allah, I worship only Allah".* [3]

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 551.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

Sura Kāfirūn
(Disbelievers)

No. 109 (verses 1-6)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ قُلْ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الْكٰفِرُونَ

٢ لَآ أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ

٣ وَلَآ أَنتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعْبُدُ

٤ وَلَآ أَنَا۠ عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدتُّمْ

٥ وَلَآ أَنتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعْبُدُ

٦ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Say: O you disbelievers,"
2. "I worship not what you worship,"
3. "Nor do you worship Whom I worship,"
4. "Neither shall I worship what you worship,"
5. "Nor will you worship Whom I worship,"
6. "To you be your religion, and to me my religion."

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Occasion of the Revelation:

Islamic narrations denote that this Sura was revealed about some of the pagan chiefs of the Quraish tribe such as 'Walīd-ibn-i-Muqayrah', ' 'Āṣ - ibn - i - Wā' il ', ' Hārith - ibn - i - Qays', ' Umīyat - ibn - i - Kalaf' and so on. They said: *"O Mohammad Follow our belief and we will follow yours and we will let you enjoy all our privileges. For one year you should worship our gods and the next year we will worship your God. If your belief is better, we have enjoyed it with you; and if our belief is better, you have enjoyed it with us".*

The Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) said: *"I take refuge to Allah that I make no match of anything with Him".*

They said: *"You may touch some of our gods, at least, and take a good omen from them. If you do this, we will confirm you and worship your God".*

The Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) said: *"I am waiting for the command of my Lord".*

At that moment this Sura was revealed. Then, the Messenger of Allah went to the Sacred Mosque. A number of the chiefs of the Quraish were gathered there. He stood on a place above them and recited this Sura, wholly, to them. When they heard the message of the Sura they became completely hopeless of their aim and began hurting him and his followers.

Commentary:

He Never Agrees with the Idol Worshippers.

The verses of this Sura address the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) and the command is:

"Say: O you disbelievers,"

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"I worship not what you worship",

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"Nor do you worship Whom I worship",

Thus, he clearly defines his way which is totally different from their way. He frankly states that he never worships idols and that they, with their stubbornness and the blind following of their ancestors and their persisting in it, never agree with worshipping *Allah*, which is free

from polytheism, nor do they leave their unlawful, great amounts of income gained from other idol worshippers.

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Again, in order to disappoint the idol worshippers aim, completely, of him (*p.b.u.h.*) leaving monotheism and accepting idolatry, it says:

"Neither shall I worship what you worship",

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"Nor will you worship Whom I worship".

Therefore, he is stating that they not urge him, uselessly, upon accepting idolatry; it is impossible.

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"To you be your religion, and to me my religion."

Many of the commentators have clearly said that the objective of using the term / kāfirūn /, here, is for a particular group of chiefs among the idol worshippers of Mecca.

Perhaps, their reason for saying this, in addition to the matter mentioned for the occasion of revelation is that, finally, many of the idol worshippers of Mecca believed in Islam. So, when he says: ***"Nor do you worship Whom I worship," "Neither shall I worship what you worship"*** it is certainly about those chiefs among the idol worshippers who never believed the truth even to the end of their lives; while many pagans had entered *Allah's* religion in crowds at the time Mecca was captured.

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Here, there are some questions which should be answered:

1. ***Why Does The Sura Begin With The Command: 'Say'?***

Would it not be better to begin with ***'O disbelievers'*** without having added ***'Say'*** at the beginning? In other words, the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) should carry out the command of *Allah* and tells them only the phrase ***'O disbelievers'*** without repeating ***'Say'*** along with it.

Regarding the content of the Sura, the answer to the question is clear, because the pagans had invited the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) to collude with them regarding idols, so it means he should repell this from himself and say that he would never agree with them in idolatry. If the

word *'Say'* were not at the beginning of this Sura, the statement would be the statement of *Allah* not that of Mohammad, and thus the sentence: ***"I worship not what you worship"***, and the like, would be meaningless.

Moreover, the word ***' Say '*** was in the message that Gabriel brought from *Allah*. The holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) had to retell exactly what was stated, in order to preserve the authenticity of the Holy Qur'an. This would illustrate that Gabriel and the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) did not make the least variation in the Divine revelation, and have actually proved that they have been obedient missionaries to the command of *Allah*; as **Sura Yunus, No. 10, verse 15** says: ***"...Say: 'It is not for me, of my own accord to change it: I follow naught but what is revealed unto me..."***

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2. ***Did The Idol Worshippers Deny Allah?***

We know that idol worshippers never denied *Allah*, and according to the clear verses of Qur'an if they were asked about the creator of the heavens and the earth, they said that it is *Allah*: ***"If thou ask them who it is that created the heavens and the earth they will certainly say, Allah..."*** , (**Sura Luqmān, No. 31, verse 25**).

Then, how is it that it says, in this Sura: ***"Neither shall I worship what you worship," "Nor will you worship Whom I worship'*** ?

Regarding the proposition which is not on the '***creation***', but, the subject matter is upon '***worshipping***', it makes the answer to this question clear, too. Idol worshippers knew *Allah* as the creator of the world, but they believed that they should '***worship***' the idols so that the idols would become intercessors in the *Court of Allah*, or that they, themselves, are not worthy enough to worship *Allah*, but, that they should worship the man-made idols. This is the point that the Qur'an rejects firmly and, refusing their false imaginings, it says worship must be performed only to *Allah*; not to idols, alone, nor to both of them.

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3. ***What Is This Repetition In The Verses For?***

So many different ideas have been given on the purpose of the repetition for the lack of worship of idols by the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), and the lack of worship for *Allah* by the disbelievers.

Some believe that this repetition is for emphasis and for disappointing the polytheists and distinguishing the ways of Islam from their ways, and for logical reasoning of the impossibility of collusion between monotheism and polytheism. In other words, since they insisted on inviting the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) to polytheism and repeated it, the Qur'an, too, repeats the refusal of their proposal.

A tradition denotes that Abū Shākir Dīṣānī, a disbeliever, asked Abū Ja'far Ahwal, one of the followers of Imam Sādiq, why the same proposition is repeated, in this Sura, the act of which is opposed to the excellence of eloquence.

Abū Ja'far, who knew no answer for the question, went to the sixth holy Imam Ja'far ibn-i-Mohammad As-Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) in Medina and asked him for the answer. The holy Imam said that the cause for the revelation of these verses and its repetition, in the Sura, was just in reply to the repetition in the proposal by the disbelievers who told the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) that he should worship, for one year, what they worshipped and the next year they would worship what he worshipped. These verses were revealed and refused all their proposals.[1]

Some others have said that this repetition is for the reason that one refers to the present and the other refers to the future; that is, 'I never worship what you worship, neither at the present nor in the future'. (But apparently, there is no evidence for this commentary).

There is also a third commentary which says that the first repetition states the difference of what is worshipped, and the second refers to the difference in worship. That is, '***neither do I worship what you worship nor is my worship like your worship, because mine, free from any other motives, is pure and only for Allah, the One True God.***'

Besides, '***your worship of the idols is based on ancestral custom, social conviction or imitative instincts, but my worship, of Allah, is based on acknowledgement and thankfulness***'.[2]

However, it seems that the repetition, as was said before, is for emphasis, as the aforementioned tradition from Imam Sādiq refers to, also.

1 Tafsīr-i-Ali-ibn-Ibrāhīm, vol. 2, p. 445.

2 Abulfutūkh-i-Razī, Commentary, vol. 12, p. 192.

4. *Is The Phrase: 'To You Be Your Religion' A Licence For Idolatry?*

It is sometimes considered that the last verse, of this Sura, which says: "*To you be your religion, and to me my religion*" has the concept of '*a general peace*' and it lets them remain in their religion, because it does not urge them to accept Islam.

But, this consideration is very weak and baseless, because the tone of the statement in the verses clearly shows that this meaning is a kind of scorn and warning, i.e., let your religion be yours and you will see its fatal consequence soon. This idea is similar to **Sura Qasas, No. 28, verse 55:** "*And when they hear vain talk, they turn away therefrom and say: 'To us our deeds and to you yours; peace be to you; we seek not the ignorant*" .

There are a great deal of verses in the Qur'an that condemn polytheism in any form. The verses count it as the worst thing and consider it as an unforgivable sin.

There are some other answers to this question, but the first meaning, as an answer, seems the most appropriate.

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5. *Not Even For One Moment Did He Collude With Polytheism.*

What is stated in this Sura is, in fact, a statement of fact that monotheism and polytheism are two distinct separate ways, completely opposite to each other. They have no similarity in each other. Monotheism leads Man to *Allah*, but polytheism makes *Allah* a stranger to him.

Monotheism is the secret of unity in all aspects, while polytheism is the source of dispersion and separation in all affairs.

Monotheism promotes Man from the world of materialism: high up beyond the natural world, and joins him to the eternal world, to the infinite being of *Allah*. But, polytheism drops Man down into the well of materialism. It joins him to limited, weak, perishing creatures.

For the same reason the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) and all other great prophets not only did not collude with polytheism, but their first and greatest duty was also to fight against it.

Now, it is to all those who seek truth and the scholars and preachers of this religion to follow the same way, and they must proclaim their detachment and their hatred of any polytheism and collusion with polytheists, verywhere. This is the true way of Islam.

Supplication:

O Lord! Keep us aloof from any polytheism and any polytheistic deed and thought.

O Lord! The temptations of the polytheists, of our time, are also very dangerous. Protect us from falling into their traps.

O Lord! Bestow on us such clarity and decisiveness that, like the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) we can refuse any proposal of collusion with blasphemy and polytheism.

The End
Sura Kāfirūn
(Disbelievers)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Naṣr
(Help)

No. 110 (3 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

This Sura was revealed at Medina after the migration of the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) from Mecca to Medina. It contains the glad tidings of a great victory for Islam, after which, people, in droves, flocked to the banner of Islam. Then, to thank *Allah* for that great gift, the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) is invited to '***glorify***' and '***praise***' *Allah*, and to pray for His '***forgiveness***'.

There were many victories for Islam, but no triumph was as important as the bloodless conquest of Mecca, especially the Arabs believed, according to some narrations, that if the Prophet of Islam (***p.b.u.h.***) could conquer and capture Mecca, then, it was a sign of his legitimacy because if he were not right, *Allah* would not let him do so, as He did not allow Abrahah and his great force to destroy the Ka'ba. It was for this reason that the Arab pagans entered Islam, in groups, after the conquest of Mecca.

Some have said that this Sura was revealed alongside the '***Hadibiyyah Peace***'; six years after migration and two years before the conquest of Mecca.

But, it is completely improbable to say, (as some have said), that it was revealed at the time of the farewell Pilgrimage after the conquest of Mecca, in the year 10 A.H. because, the ideas involved in the Sura, which inform of the incidents regarding the future, not the past, do not fit with this meaning.

One of the names of this Sura is / taudī' / '***leave-taking***', because it implicitly implicates the death of the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***).

A tradition indicates that when this Sura was revealed and the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) recited it to the followers, they all became happy,

but Abbās, the uncle of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), began shedding tears. The holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) asked him why he was crying. He answered that he supposed the Sura contained the implication of the Prophet's death. And he (*p.b.u.h.*) said: *"It is so, my uncle"*. [1]

The commentators are divided on how this meaning is understood, from the Sura, when there is nothing apparent in it to imply the idea. The Sura is wholly about the victory, and it seems that the Prophetic mission of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) is completely fulfilled and his religion is fixed. It is clear that in such a case the departure of the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) from this fleeting world to the next, eternal world, is completely predictable.

The Virtue of Studying this Sura:

A tradition from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) says: *"He who recites it (Sura Naṣr), it is the same as if he had been with the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) at the conquest of Mecca"*. [2]

Another tradition from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) says: *"He who recites Sura Naṣr in his optional (نافلة)* [3] *or obligatory prayers, Allah makes him successful in defeating his enemies, totally, and on the Day of Judgement he will come with a letter which talks. Verily Allah has brought him out of his grave with that letter as an immunity from the heat and fire of Hell..."*. [4]

It is clear that this virtue and honour is for the person who, with reciting it, follows the way of the Messenger of Allah (*p.b.u.h.*) and practices his religion and his tradition, not only suffices its recitation with the tongue.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 554. (also see Al-Mīzān, vol. 20, p. 532.)

2 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 553.

3 See footnote 1 in Sura Mā'ūn, page 249, of this volume.

4 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, 553.

Sura Naṣr
(Help)

No. 110 (verses 1-3)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ إِذَا جَآءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَ الْفَتْحُ

٢ وَ رَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا

٣ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَ اسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "When there comes the help of Allah and victory",

2. "And you see people entering Allah's religion in multitudes",

3. "Then celebrate the praise of your Lord and seek His forgiveness, (for) surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy)".

Commentary:

Allah's Help Brings Multitudes to Allah's Religion.

"When there comes the help of Allah and victory",

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"And you see people entering Allah's religion in multitudes".

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"Then celebrate the praise of your Lord and seek His forgiveness, (for) surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy)".

In these three short, but, expressive verses, there are some elegant, elaborations whose careful observation helps us to understand the final goal of the Sura.

In the first verse, it says that the victory belongs to *Allah*. It is not only in this occurence that this meaning is mentioned, but, in many other verses of the Qur'an the idea is reflected, including **Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verse 214**: *"...Ah! Verily the help of Allah is (always) near!"*; and **Sura Āli - 'Imrān, No. 3, verse 126**; and also **Sura Anfāl, No. 8, verse 10**, says: *"...There is no help except from Allah..."*.

It is true that preparation and supplying forces are necessary for defeating the enemy, but a believing person knows the victory comes only from *Allah*, and for the same reason when victory comes he does not become deluded or proud, but thanks and praises *Allah*.

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In this Sura, the words are about, at first, the help of *Allah*, then, the victory, and, then, the influence and spread of Islam, and finally, the entering of people, in groups, into the religion of *Allah*. All of them are causes and effects for each other.

Victory is absent unless there is the help of *Allah*, and people do not enter Islam in multitudes unless there is triumph and victory in order to remove the barriers and hindrances from the way. Of course, along with these stages, each of which is a great, divine blessing, the stage of being thankful and praising *Allah* comes forth.

On the other hand, the help of *Allah* and the victory are all for the final goal, i.e., people entering *Allah's* religion in multitudes, and guidance for all.

Victory, here, is stated in general, and with some evidences that were mentioned before, the purpose is, undoubtedly, the conquest of Mecca which had such a wide effect. And, verily, the conquest of Mecca introduced a new chapter in the history of Islam, because the main center of polytheism was disturbed; idols were destroyed; the hope of the idol worshippers changed into disappointment; and the barriers in the way of people's faith in Islam were removed.

That is why the conquest of Mecca should be considered as a stage of the settlement of Islam in Arabia and, then, in the world. It was after the conquest of Mecca that no opposition from the pagans was seen (except once, which was quickly controlled) and people from all parts of Arabia came to the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) to accept Islam.

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There are three important instructions, in the verse, given to the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) (and naturally to all believers) which are, in fact, a gratitude for this great victory and an appropriate response to the help of *Allah*: The instructions of celebrating, praising, and seeking His forgiveness.

This great victory caused the polytheistic thoughts to disappear; the perfection and beauty of *Allah* to become more clear; and those who had lost the right way to return to the truth.

Further, it is possible that at the time of victory, some disgraceful behaviour appears in a person and he becomes involved in pride and self-conceit, or tries to take revenge and clear the personal accounts against his enemy. These three instructions train him ***'to remember the attributes of perfection and the beauty of Allah at the sensitive moments of victory'***; and ***'to know all of the effects from Him'***; and ***'to seek His forgiveness in order to both remove pride and negligence from himself, and avoid revengefulness'***.

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It is certain that the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) of Islam, like all other prophets (*a.s.*), was sinless; then what is the instruction of seeking His forgiveness for?

To answer this question, it should be said that this is a model for the whole community, and on the part of a sinless, infallible one like the holy Prophet and his Ahlul-Bait (*p.b.u.th.*), who have already been purified by the Lord, Himself, (**33:33**) will mean seeking further grace and greater blessings or futher protection of the Lord against the forces of Satan.

Here, /istiḳfār/ means holy Prophet's beseeching the protection of the Lord, for himself and his followers, against the forces of evil, and seeking pardon of the Lord on behalf of his faithful adherents who might have been prey of human weakness, as did Moses for his people who had yielded to the worship of the calf.

The phrase /inna hū kāna tawwābā/ ***'surely, He is Oft-returning (to mercy)'*** is the statement of reason in proportion to ***'seeking forgiveness'***, that is, ***'seek forgiveness and repent because Allah is Oft-returning (merciful)'***.

By the way, it may also refer to the meaning that '***when Allah accepts your repentance, you, too, should accept the repentance of the guilty after victory, as far as you can, and do not repulse them from yourselves as long as there is no sign of offense or plot coming from them.***' So, the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), himself, on the event of the conquest of Mecca, showed the feature of Islamic grace and mercy to his defeated, hostile enemies at its highest standard.

It was not only the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) who celebrated *Allah's* grace and glory on his final victory against his enemies, but all prophets throughout history also did so. For example, when Joseph (***a.s.***) became exalted in Egypt and his parents and his brothers succeeded in seeing him after a very long time, he said: "***O my Lord! Thou hast indeed bestowed on me some power, and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams and events, – O Thou Creator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my Protector in the world and in the Hereafter. Take Thou my soul (at death) as one submitting to Thy Will (as a Muslim), and unite me with the righteous***". (**Sura Yūsuf, No. 12, verse 101**).

Or, when Solomon saw the throne of Bilqīs (Queen of Sheba) ready before him, he said: "***...this is by the grace of my Lord! – to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful!...***" (**Sura Naml, No. 27, verse 40**).

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The conquest of Mecca was the greatest victory. After that conquest, whole tribes from all parts of Arabia gave their allegiance to the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), collectively, and before his earthly ministry was finished, the ground was prepared for the introduction of Islam to the world.

What was the lesson to be learned from this episode in world history? It was not about Man's self-glory, but humility; not power, but, service; not an appeal to Man's selfishness or self-sufficiency, but, a realization of *Allah's* Grace and Mercy, and the abundant outpouring of *Allah's* Praises in word and conduct.

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Supplication:

O Lord! You are able to give that glory back, again, to Muslims under the light of following the traditions of the Apostle.

O Lord! Set us among the true advocates of the Messenger of Islam.

O Lord! Bestow on us such a success that we can spread Islamic Justice in the world so that the people of the world eagerly accept it in multitudes.

The End

Sura Nasr

(Help)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Sura Lahab (The Flame)

No. 111 (5 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

This Meccan Sura, which was revealed at the beginning of the open invitation to the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), contains the name of one of the enemies of Islam and the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), at that time, Abū Lahab, for whom a strong warning is given. The content of the Sura shows that he harbored a special enmity toward the Apostle and both he and his wife committed whatever vice they could against him.

The Qur'an clearly says that they both will enter Hell from which they cannot escape. This prophecy actually happened and finally they died without having faith in Islam. This is an explicit prediction of the Holy Qur'an.

It is cited in a tradition, that the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) said: "***He who recites it (Sura Lahab), I hope that Allah will not gather him and Abū Lahab in the same abode***". (i.e., he will be in Paradise while Abū Lahab will be in Hell). [1]

The Virtue in Studying this Sura:

It is obvious that this virtue is of the person who, with reciting it, goes another way diverse from Abū Lahab's, not of the one who recites it with the tongue, but, acts like Abū Lahab.

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Occasion of the Revelation of the Sura:

It is narrated from Ibn Abbās that when the verse: "***And admonish thy nearest kinsmen,***" (**Sura Shu'arā, No. 26, verse 214**), was revealed, the holy Prophet was commanded by *Allah* to gather his close relatives and announce, openly, the invitation of Islam for the first time, and that he was the apostle of *Allah*. Then, he climbed to the top of Mount Safā and called: / yā ṣabāḥā /. (This phrase was used

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 558.

to inform all people to prepare to defend themselves when an enemy was about to attack.)

When the people heard the call of Mohammad, they went to him. He pointed out the different Arab tribes by name and, addressing the assembly, asked: ***"If I tell you that there is a huge enemy army camping at the foot of this mountain, on the other side, will you believe me?"*** The whole assembly unanimously said: ***"Certainly we will believe, for thou hast never told a lie"***. ***"Then"***, said the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***): ***"I have come from Allah as a warner to preach the Unity of the Lord"***. Hearing this, Abū Lahab exclaimed: ***"Perdition to thee! Was it for this that thou assembled us?"*** It was at that moment that this Sura was revealed, saying: ***"May the hands of Abū Lahab perish, may he (himself) perish"***.

The danger and enmity of Abū Lahab and his wife was not limited only to that action. They were the worst people of that time and the most habitual enemies of early Islam. That is why the Qur'an clearly and scornfully reproaches them. Some other details will be pointed out later, *Allah* willing.

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Sura Lahab
(The Flame)

No. 111 (verses 1-5)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ تَبَّتْ يَدَآ أَبِى لَهَبٍ وَ تَبَّ

٢ مَآ أَغْنٰى عَنْهُ مٰا لُهُ وَ مٰا كَسَبَ

٣ سَيَصْلٰى نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ

٤ وَ ٱمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ ٱلْحَطَبِ

٥ فِى جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِنْ مَسَدٍ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. *"May the hands of Abū Lahab perish, may he (himself) perish".*
2. *"His wealth avails him not, neither what he had earned".*
3. *"Soon will he roast in a flaming fire",*
4. *"And his wife, the bearer of the firewood,"*
5. *"Upon her neck a rope of twisted palm-fibre."*

Commentary:

Perish the Hands of Abū Lahab!

As it was said in the '***Occasion of Revelation of the Sura***', this Sura is, indeed, an answer to the disgraceful words of Abū Lahab; the Prophet's uncle and the son of Abdul Muttalib. Among those people he was one of the strongest enemies of Islam. When he heard the clear, general invitation of the holy Messenger of Allah (*p.b.u.h.*)

and his warning of the punishment of *Allah*, he said: ***"Perdition to thee! Was it for this that thou assembled us?"*** Then, the Holy Qur'an answers him: ***"May the hands of Abū Lahab perish, may he (himself) perish."***

The terms /tab/ and /tabāb/, as Rāġib cites in Mufradāt, mean ***'the constant loss'***, but Tabarsī cites in Majma'-al-Bayān that ***'the meaning is a loss which leads to perdition'***.

Some of the philologists have rendered it to mean ***'to cut'*** which, perhaps, is for the reason that a constant loss naturally leads to a stop. However, from all these meanings it is concluded that it is the same meaning that was said in the verse.

Of course, this perdition may refer to this world or to the spiritual world or both of them.

Why does the Holy Qur'an, inspite of its common style, mention Abū Lahab, so strongly scorned, by name?

To make the answer of this question clear, Abū Lahab should be introduced.

Abū Lahab, i.e. the Father of the Flames, whose name was 'Abdul-'Uzzā and means the servant of the idol 'Uzzā, was a man of fiery temperament with a reddish face. This nickname, perhaps, was chosen for him, because, ***'lahab'*** , in Arabic, means ***'a flame of fire'***.

He and his wife, Umm-i-Jamīl; a sister of Abū Sufyān, being specifically mentioned as the cursed ones among the enemies of Islam, hurt the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) very much. A person by the name of 'Ṭāriq Muḥāribī' says that once Abū Lahab was found going behind the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) passing through the marketplace called 'Zul-Mujāz'; (it is close to 'Arafāt, a short distance from Mecca). He was following behind him (***p.b.u.h.***) shouting to the people not to listen to the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) saying that he was a mad man and pelting his feet with stones, causing the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) to walk with bleeding wounds.

There are many stories of this kind narrated about the ceaseless, hideous treatment and futile statements of Abū Lahab against Prophet Mohammad (***p.b.u.h.***) which can be counted as reasons for why the verses, under discussion, criticize and curse him and his wife so clearly and severely.

He was the only person who did not sign the supporting agreement of Banī Hāshim from the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***)

although, he took part in the agreements of the enemies of Islam, and persisted to remain his (*p.b.u.h.*) enemy. Regarding these facts, the reason for the exceptional case of this Sura can be made clear.

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"His wealth avails him not, neither what he has earned".

It is understood from this statement that Abū Lahab was a rich, proud man who boasted about his wealth and used it against Islam.

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"Soon will he roast in a flaming fire".

His punishment, as well as his name, Abū Lahab, flourished with great, blazing flames.

Not only the wealth of Abū Lahab, but, also, no wealth or social position of infidels and wrong doers avails them in rescuing them from the fire of Hell, as **Sura Shu'arā, No. 29, verses 88 and 89** say: *"The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail," "But only he (will prosper) that brings to Allah a sound heart".*

It is certain that the fire mentioned in the verse; *"Soon will he roast in a flaming fire"* is the fire of Hell, but some believe that it can involve the fire of this world, too.

It is narrated that after the defeat of the Meccans at Badr, Abū Lahab, who had not participated in the battle, asked Abū Sufyān, when he returned from the battlefield, about its details. Abū Sufyān described to him the event of how the Quraish were defeated and, then, he added: *"By Allah, we saw, in the course of battle, some riders between the earth and heaven who had come to help Mohammad".*

Here, Abū Rāfi', one of the servants of Abbās tells the story thus: *"I was sitting there and I raised my hand and said that they were the angels of Heaven. Then, Abū Lahab became so angry that he sharply struck my face and lifted me up and I fell hard upon the ground.*

He continued beating me because of his grief from his disappointment. At that moment, Ummul-Fadl, Abbās' wife, who was attending there, took a stake and struck it hard on Abū Lahab's head, and said: 'Have you found this weak man alone ?'.

The head of Abū Lahab became wounded and bloody. One week later he died from a contagious disease and since his body gave off an unbearable,

foul smell no one approached it. It was left for three days and, at last, some slaves were hired to carry it out of Mecca. They watered it from a distance and then piled stones on top of it until it was buried." [1]

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"And his wife, the bearer of the firewood,"

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"Upon her neck a rope of twisted palm-fibre".

It is no wonder that Umm-i-Jamīl, the sister of Abū Sufyān and Mu'āwiyah's aunt, was Abū Lahab's wife. She was a squint-eyed woman equally bad tempered, like her husband; mischievous and grossly wicked. She cooperated with him in hostilities and hindrances against Islam. But, as to why the Qur'an describes her as '***the bearer of the firewood***' several commentaries have been given.

Some have said that it is because she used to tie bundles of thorny branches with ropes of twisted palm leaf fibre, carrying them and scattering them about on dark nights along the paths, which the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) was expected to take, with the expressed intention of wounding his feet and causing him bodily injury.

Some others believe that '***the bearer of the firewood***' may also be symbolic for carrying tales between people to embroil them (in the web of backbiting). This was also one of her vices.

Some commentators have said that she will carry the heavy load of the sins of others on the Day of Judgement.

The first meaning, among these commentaries, seems the most appropriate, though the combination of them all is not impossible.

The term / jīd / means '***neck and the upper part of the chest***', whose plural form is / ajyād /. But, / 'unuq / means '***the back part of the neck***', while / raqabah / means '***the neck***' on the whole.

The term / masad / is a rope made of palm leaf fibre. Some have said that it is a rope with the harshness of palm fibre and the heat and heaviness of iron which will be put on her neck in Hell.

Some have also said that Umm-i-Jamīl had a very precious necklace. She had sworn that she would spend it against the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***). For this behaviour, perhaps, *Allah* has appointed

1 Bihār-al-Anwār, vol. 19, p. 227.

for her such a punishment.

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Explanation:

Prophecy: A Sign of the Mircle of the Qur'an.

We know that these verses were revealed in Mecca, and it was announced that Abū Lahab and his wife will roast in the fire of Hell, i.e. they will not believe in the Truth. Finally, many pagans of Mecca believed, indeed, and some only apparently believed, but, of those who believed neither truly nor apparently were these two people.

This is one of the predictions of the Holy Qur'an that was concealed. There are some concealed facts which are discussed in a separate book under the title of '***Miracles of the Qur'an***' and, in the commentary, they are referred to accordingly.

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Relationship is Not a Reason for Faith.

Abū Lahab and his wife being specifically mentioned as the cursed ones, among the enemies of Islam, is just to emphasize that no relationship whatsoever, even with the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), can be of any benefit when the person lacks in Faith. The men of Faith show no inclination toward those who go astray and never follow them in their wrong way, even when they are their close relatives.

Abū Lahab was the uncle of the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) but, when he did not follow the command of *Allah* he was blamed and warned of the divine punishment as other disbelievers are, even more than others, because, his behavior was worse than others. On the contrary, those who not only were not among the Apostle's relatives but, also were from other countries even with different races and languages, but, believed and parcticed with their true Faith, were so close to the Prophet of Islam (***p.b.u.h.***) that, for example, according to a tradition, the apostle said about Salmān-Farsi: "***Salmān is of our Ahlul-Bait***". It was as if he were one of the family members of the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***).

It is true that this Sura is about Abū Lahab and his wife, but it is clear that they are cursed because of their behaviour and thoughts, and hence, every individual or group of people who possesses their qualities will have the same destiny as theirs.

Supplication:

O Lord! Clear our hearts from any grudge.

O Lord! We are all afraid of the final result. Give us security and ease and arrange our destiny in a good condition.

O Lord! We know that in that Great Court neither wealth nor relationship will avail us but by Your Grace.

The End
Sura Lahab
(The Flame)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Ikhlās (Monotheism)

No. 112 (4 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

This Sura, as its name indicates, is about the Unity of *Allah*, and His Oneness. In its four verses, the Sura describes monotheism completely.

Occasion of Revelation of the Sura:

On the occasion of revelation of this Sura, a tradition from Imam Sādiq (*p.b.u.h.*) says: ***"A Jew asked the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) to describe the identity or to relate the geneology of Allah. He remained silent and gave no answer for three days, then, the Messenger Angel brought (him) this Sura and he (p.b.u.h.) gave them their answer."*** [1]

Some other narrations denote that the Jew who asked this question was 'Abdullah ibn Sūriyā, one of the known chiefs of the Jews. Another narration says that 'Abdullah ibn Salām asked this question from the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), in Mecca, and believed (in Islam), but, he kept his faith concealed.

Another narration says that the pagans of Mecca asked such a question. [2]

In some narrations it is also said that the Christians of Najrān asked the question.

There is no contradiction in these narrations because the question may have been asked by all of them, separately, which is, itself, an evidence to the extraordinary importance of this Sura, which answers the questions of different persons from various groups.

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1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 564.

2 Al-Mīzān, vol. 20, p. 546.

The Virtue of Studying this Sura:

On the virtue of reciting this Sura, numerous narrations from the holy Prophet and Ahlul-Bait (***p.b.u.th.***) are cited in Islamic sources which refer to the extraordinary greatness of the Sura. The author of Aṭyab-ul-Bayān Commentary, collected 25 of them. [1]

The holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) is narrated to have said in a tradition: ***"Is there anyone of you unable to recite one third of the Qur'an in one night"?***

One of his listeners asked: "O Messenger of Allah! Who is able to do that"?

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Recite 'Say: He, Allah, is One! (Sura Ikhlās)". [2]

A tradition says that the recitation of this Sura, when arriving at a home, causes the increase of sustenance and removing poverty from the people therein. [3]

There are ninety different traditions and narrations mentioned, with their approved references, on the virtue and commentary of this Sura in Tafsīr-i-Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn. [4]

On the idea that reading this Sura is equal to one third of the whole Qur'an, some have said that it is for the reason that the Holy Qur'an contains ordinances, creeds, and history, and this Sura states the creed part in an intensive form.

Some others have said that the Qur'an is made up of three main themes; origin, end, and what is in the middle between these two, and this Sura is about the first theme.

This meaning, that about one third of the Qur'an is the description of monotheism, is also acceptable; the extract of which has come in this Sura.

In conclusion, of this statement, we cite a tradition on the splendor of the Sura.

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1 Aṭyab-ul-Bayān, vol. 14, p. 259.

2 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 561 (and other commentary sources).

3 Ibid.

4 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 699-715.

Imam Ali - ibn al - Hosain az - Zain - ul - ʻĀbideen (*p.b.u.h.*) was asked about **Sura Ikhlās** (Monotheism), and he said: "***Verily Allah, the Almighty and Glorious, knew that at the end of time there will come some people who will be precise and careful (in affairs), then, He sent down the Sura (Ikhlās), and the beginning verses of Sura Ḥadīd up to 'And He has full knowledge of the secrets of (all) hearts'. Everyone who seeks beyond this will perish***".[1]

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1 Usūl-i-Kāfī, vol. 1, Chapter Nesbat, ŧradition 3.

Sura Ikhlās
(Monotheism)

No. 112 (verses 1-4)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ

٢ اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ

٣ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

٤ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. *"Say: He, Allah, is One,"*
2. *"Allah, the Eternal,"*
3. *"He begets not, nor is He begotten,"*
4. *"And there is none like unto Him."*

Commentary:

The first verse, of this Sura, is an answer to the repeated question of many persons from different groups of people or tribes who asked about the attributes and identity of *Allah*. The command is:

"Say: He, Allah, is One,"

It begins with the Arabic term /huwa/ '*He*' which is a pronoun-third-person-singular and refers to something known to all, but ambiguous and not identified with any, as against the usual reference in the term of first person singular '*I*'. It is, indeed, a code referring to the fact that His Holy Being is extremely concealed and no human

thought or imagination can touch it, though the signs of His Existence have filled the world, totally, and are more apparent and clear than all things, as **Sura Fussilat, No. 41, verse 53** says: *"Soon will We show them Our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth..."*.

Then, it makes this unknown fact manifest by saying that '*Allah is One*'.

By the way, the term /qul/, here, means '*express this fact and tell others*'.

A tradition from Imam Mohammad Bāqir (*p.b.u.h.*) says that after expressing this statement he has said: *"Pagans and idol worshippers used to point to their idols using demonstrative pronouns and say: 'O Mohammad, these are our gods that can be seen. You, too, describe your God so that we can see and understand'. Allah revealed these verses: 'Say: He, Allah, is One', and the /h/ in the word /huwa/ refers to the confirmation of the matter and takes it into consideration. And /w/ is a third person pronoun which refers to the meaning that it is concealed from the sight of the eyes and it is beyond the limits of the touch of the senses"*. [1]

In another tradition, Imam Amir-ul-Mo'mineen Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) says: *" On the night before the battle of Badr I saw 'Khidr' in my dream. I asked him to teach me something with which I would defeat the enemies. He told me: 'Say: / yā hū yā man lā huwa illā hū /. The next morning I told the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) what had happened, and he (p.b.u.h.) said: 'O Ali, you have been taught the Greatest Name (of Allah)'. Thereafter, I repeatedly said the phrase in the battle of Badr "*. [2]

When 'Ammār Yāsir heard that Hazrat Ali (*p.b.u.h.*) was reciting this phrase, habitually, while he was fighting on the day of Siffīn, he asked him what it was, and Hazrat Ali *(p.b.u.h.)* replied: *"It is the Greatest Name (of Allah) and the pillar of monotheism"*. [3]

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Allah is a proper name for God, and the meaning of the Imam's expression is that in this very word are gathered all His attributes of

1 Bihār-al-Anwār, vol. 3, p. 221, Tradition 12.

2 Ibid., p. 222.

3 Ibid.

Bounty and Glory, and due to this it has been called '***The Greatest of Names***'.

This proper name is used for nothing but God, while other names for *Allah*, each of which usually refers to one of His qualities of Beauty and Glory, are often used for other than Him.

The root of the word is mentioned differently; / ilāhat /, / alāhah /, / alilāhah /, / ilāh /, / walih / ; however, *Allah*, from whatever root it is, has been used as a proper noun, applied to ***'the Being Who exists necessarily, by Himself, comprising all the attributes of perfection; a proper name denoting the true god, containing all the excellent, divine names; a unity having all the essence of existing things'***.

This Sacred Name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an almost one thousand times, which is more than any other name of His Holy Names. This name brings light in our heart, makes us firm and calm, and takes us into a world full of purity and serenity.

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The term / aḥad / is derived from / waḥdah /, and some believe that / aḥad / and / wāḥid / are the same in many cases. In this case, / aḥad / is interchangeable with / wāḥid / when it is used as an epithet applied for *Allah*, because / al-aḥad /, as an epithet, is applied to *Allah* alone, and signifies ***'the One'***; the Soul; He Who has always been one and alone; or the Indivisible; or He Who has no second (to share) in His Lordship, nor in His Essence, nor in His attributes.

One can say / huwal wāḥid / and / huwal aḥad / and, in like manner, / aḥad / without the article being used as an epithet, especially in relation to *Allah*. It is interchangeable, in this case, (but not in other cases) with / wāḥid /. In this verse / aḥad / is a substitute for *Allah*, just as an indeterminate noun is sometimes a substitute for a determinate noun.

But, some others believe that there is a vast difference between the two Arabic words / aḥad / and / wāḥid / both commonly thought to mean ***'Oneness'***. To indicate the Unity of God, it is said, in this verse, that God is *Allah*, i.e. ***One***; One in the sense of Absolute Oneness of His Essential Existence, not in the numerical sense of the word, which has its second and third, but, the One which has no second.

The expression '*One*', is in the sense of being the ' ***ONLY*** ' and, in conceiving Whose existence, all faculties of the human intellect are helpless. He is such a One that even His attributes are His Essence and are not and can never be separate from Him.

It is a death blow which Islam has rendered, about the All-Divine, to all imaginary concepts of any kind of polytheistic doctrines and the phenomena of plurality.

He is One with none comparable to Him, without any beginning or end, unlimited by time, space or circumstances. A reality before which all others have no existence. He is the Creator, One, and everything is His creation.

A tradition from Imam Mohammad Bāqir (***p.b.u.h.***) says: " ***'Aḥad' and 'wāḥid' both have one concept which is One with nothing comparable or similar to it, and monotheism is the confession to His Oneness***".[1]

In the Qur'an / wāḥid / and / aḥad / , both, refer to *Allah* , the One, the Only.

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In the next verse, another epithet of that Holy Essence is referred to:

"Allah, The Eternal"

Many meanings are mentioned for / ṣamad / in Islamic narrations, commentaries, and lexicons.

Rāqib cites in Mufradāt that '***Ṣamad means a Lord; one to whom reference is made in matters of importance***'. Some others have said that 'ṣamad' means '***something whose inside is not hollow, but it is full***'.

It also means ' ***a Lord*** ', when applied for *Allah* , because affairs are dependant upon Him. '***Ṣamad***' signifies one who is high or elevated in the utmost highness, and a Lord to whom one resigns himself, has recourse to, or is in need of, or One above Whom there is no one, or One Who continues, after His creatures have perished.

Imam Hosain ibn Ali (***p.b.u.h.***), in a tradition, has stated five meanings for ' ***ṣamad*** ':

1 Biḥār-ul-Anwār, vol. 3, p. 222.

1. Ṣamad is a Lord Whose Lordship has attained its utmost point or degree.
2. Ṣamad is an Essence and Being that continues or continues for ever or is everlasting.
3. Ṣamad is the Existence that has not a hollow inside.
4. Ṣamad is the One Who takes no nourishment, food or drink.
5. Ṣamad is One Who does not sleep. [1]

A tradition from Imam Ali-ibn-al Hosain (*p.b.u.h.*) says: " ***'Ṣamad' is One Who has no partner and it is not difficult for Him to protect things, and nothing is hidden from Him***". [2]

Some others have said / ṣamad / means ' ***independent of anyone'***—All perfect—the One to Whom recourse is made by everything: Eternal for its needs, both for existence and for perfection; the One Who needs no sustenance of any kind—Self-existing to understand, Whose existence, every mind is captured in marvel and wonder. Nothing is hidden from His all-enveloping knowledge—is not accommodatable in anything, not even in intellect: Infinite in all aspects of existence and attributes.

The term ' ***ṣamad*** ' has such a vast meaning that we cannot mention them, completely, or in other words, the names or the attributes, mentioned to describe its nature, cannot be translated to covey the exact sense to the fullest meaning of the terms.

A tradition denotes that the citizens of Basrah wrote a letter to Imam Hosain (*p.b.u.h.*) and asked him the meaning of / ṣamad /. He replied: "***In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful: Then do not plunge in vain talk about the Qur'an and do not dispute about it and do not speak about it when you do not know (it). Verily, I heard from my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, who said: 'The person who talks about the Qur'an without knowing (it), his abode will be in fire'. Allah, Himself, has rendered ' ṣamad ' to mean: 'He begets not, nor is He begotten', 'And there is none like unto Him'... . Yes, Allah is ' ṣamad ' Who is not from anything and is not in anything or on anything; He is the Creator of everything and all are from Him by His Power; what He has created***

1 Bihār-ul-Anwār, vol. 3, p. 223.

2 Ibid.

to perish will perish at His Will, and what He has created to remain will remain in His Knowledge. This is Allah; al - Ṣamad ". [1]

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In the next verse, it rejects the idea of the Christians, the Jews, and the pagan Arabs who declared that *Allah* had a child or is a father. It says:

"He begets not, nor is He begotten"

Different from this is the statement of those who believe in Trinity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Christians know '*Jesus*' as the son of God. The Jews believe '*Ezra*' ('Uzair) was the son of God: *"The Jews call 'Uzair a son of God, and the Christians call Christ the son of God. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them, how they are deluded away from the Truth!"*, (**Sura Taubah, No. 9, verse 30**).

The Arab pagans believed that angels were the daughters of *Allah*: *"...And they falsely having no knowledge, attribute to Him sons and daughters..."*, (**Sura An'ām, No. 6, verse 100**).

It is understood from some of the Islamic narrations that ' *begets* ', in the verse under discussion, has a broader meaning. It negates any material and delicate things emerging from Him, or He, the Sacred Essence, emerging from any material and delicate thing.

In the above mentioned letter of Imam Hosain (*p.b.u.h.*), to the people of Basrah, about the commentary of the term / ṣamad /, he commented on the current verse, saying: *"/lam yalid/, i.e. there emitted nothing from Him – neither material things nor a child, nor other things that emit from creatures, nor a delicate thing like a soul.*

Nothing appears in Him, such as sleep, imagination, grief, sadness, happiness, laughter, tears, fear and hope, courage and discouragement, hunger and satiety.

Allah is more exalted than that something should emit from Him, or that He begets something material or delicate, nor is He begotten from something material or delicate...Similar to a living creature coming out from another one, or a plant from the earth, water from a spring, fruits from

1 Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 565.

trees, nor the like, emitting delicate things from their sources, such as vision from the eye, hearing from the ears, smelling from the nose, tasting from the mouth, speech from the tongue, knowledge and understanding from the heart (insight and soul), and particles of fire from stone...". [1]

According to this tradition, ' ***begets*** ' conveys a vast meaning, so that it may envelop any emitting things of any kind from anything else, and this is, in fact, the second meaning of the verse whose first and apparent meaning was the meaning that was mentioned in the beginning. Besides, the second meaning, with the anology of the first meaning, is quite adaptable and understandable; since, if *Allah* has no children, it is because He is aloof from the qualities of material. This meaning is also right for other qualities of matter.

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"And there is none like unto Him".

The term /kufw/ originally means ' ***equal from the point of position and rank*** ', then, it is used for any similarity.

Considering this verse, the Holy Essence of *Allah* is free from all qualities or obstacles that creatures have, and free from all defects and limitations. This is ' ***Unity of Attributes*** ' that corresponds with ' ***Unity of Number*** '.

Therefore, He is One in Essence, in attributes, and in deeds; and He is unique in every aspect.

Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (***p.b.u.h.***) has said: ***"...no change can take place in Him and no lessening, diminishing, dwindling, decay and dissipation of His Mighty and Glory is possible, that He is not begotten from anyone nor does He beget anyone...He has no peer and no equal. He can destroy things created by Himself in such a way that they will cease to exist and disappear into nothingness...".*** [2]

This is an interesting commentary because it discusses the narrowest points of Unity. It warns us not to ascribe our qualities and attributes to *Allah* and, thus, not to create our glorified image as a personal diety.

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1 Biḥār-ul-Anwār, vol. 3, p. 224, and Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 566.

2 Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Sermon 186 (Arabic version).

Explanation:

The Belief in the Oneness of Allah.

The belief in *Allah*, as the Creator of the great universe, is the basis of Islam, and the criterion of thought, education, behaviour and action of the Muslim. All the details of the doctrine, nature and life's philosophy, etc., are built on this foundation.

Belief in *Allah*, in Islam, is based on logical evidence. Islam disapproves of imitation. In this respect, Imam Ali-ib-Abi-Tā'eb (*p.b.u.h.*) is quoted to have said: ***"The first step of religion is to accept, understand and realize Him (Allah) and a perfection of understanding lies in conviction and the true way of conviction is to sincerely believe that there is no god but He...".*** [1]

Islamic doctrine is rooted in the pure belief in the Oneness of *Allah*, the Glorified, and that there is no one but Him, no one like Him, or opposite to Him, etc. *Allah* is, also, above human qualities as these are characteristic of mortals. *Allah* is the Absolute, the Independent, and the Sufficient.

Believing in the Oneness of *Allah*, can according to Islamic doctrine, be understood from four distinct points:

1. ***The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in Himself:***

Allah, the Glorified, is One, Unique in Himself; not one of His creatures is like Him. ***"And there is none like unto Him",*** **(Sura Ikhlās, No. 112, verse 4).**

It is a fact dictated by sound intellect and scientific reasoning. It is logically accepted that the self of the cause is different from the effect.

It is worth mentioning that the human intellect can only perceive that which has an image which Man invokes in his own mind. *Allah*, the Glorified, is far from being reducible to this, and that is why the mind cannot fathom His Essence. How can Man perceive the Essence of the Divine self while he is unable to discover the truth about the material of the universe, though he can see and feel it and can describe it and know its effects. He, still, cannot know its essence, even if he can break it down into its component parts.

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1 Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Sermon 1.

How could he perceive the Essence of the Great Creator, while the Qur'an presents this fact: ***"...yet these (are the men) who (dare to) dispute about Allah, with the strength of His power (supreme)!"*** **(Sura Ra'd, No. 13, verse 13)**.

2. ***The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in His Attributes***:

He alone has the most glorious attributes. He has complete absoluteness in knowledge, power, will, wisdom, independence, etc. He is above all faults, and no one is like Him in His attributes. It is logical that the attributes follow the self, and so the qualities of the sun are different from that of the dust. Likewise, *Allah's* attributes are different from that of the creatures. This is the meaning of *Allah's* saying: ***"The most beautiful names belong to Allah: So call on Him by them..."*** **(Sura A'rāf, No. 7, verse 180)**, or, ***"Most Gracious, Most Merciful"***, **(Sura Fātiḥa, No. 1, verse 2)**. It clarifies that He, alone, possesses the praised attributes. This is the meaning of *Allah's* saying: ***"Glory to thy Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power! (He is free) from what they ascribe (to Him) ! "*** , **(Sura Ṣāffāt, No. 37, verse 180)**.

That means that *Allah* is above any fault the polytheists attribute to Him. The belief in the Oneness of *Allah* in His attributes cannot be comprehended except after stating the attributes which are truely *Allah's*. They are called '***the attributes of perfection***', like having power, knowledge, will, choice, life, eternity, perpetuity, and wisdom, etc. This entails denying whatever attributes that are not His, like that of imperfection and fault, the need for time and space, doing evil, incarnation, movement, having appendages like hands and legs, etc. These are called '***the attributes of greatness***' or '***the negative attributes***'.

3. ***The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in His Actions:***

It is a self-evident truth that actions are expressions of the self and of attributes. As the hand can by no means act like the mind, due to the natural difference between the two in essence and attributes, and as the wind cannot act like electrical current, so no one can act like *Allah*, the Glorified. The inventions of Man are merely a process of making good use of the natural laws set by *Allah*. It is done through the mind which is granted to Man by *Allah*. Man's role is confined to arranging the particulars according to natural laws.

Allah alone can create, provide Man's provisions, raise up from death, cause to die and resurrect. He can do whatever He wills, for He is the Lord Who can do anything.

None can, other than *Allah*, affect the creation. None can repeal *Allah's* Will or do what He does.

4. ***The Belief in the Oneness of Allah in Worship***:

True belief in the Oneness of *Allah* is incomplete without worshipping *Allah*, faithfully. He is the Creator and the Owner of His creatures. He grants them His grace. He is, for such consideration, entitled to be worshipped. All divine messages have called Man to submit and yield to *Allah* alone. The Most Exalted says: ***"Verily, I am God (Allah): There is no god but I: So serve thou Me (only), and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise"***. **(Sura Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 14).**

He taught Man to say: ***"Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek"*** **(Sura Fatiha, No. 1, verse 5).**

Worship is the gratitude shown to the source of grace and blessing, and acknowledgement of His favor, and performance of the duties ordained by *Allah* . Simultanously, it leaves its perfecting impact on the human spirit, by guiding the instinct of religiousness buried in the depths of the human soul to the right direction. Thus, Man does not go astray, or wind up in the grip of tyrants.

Being a slave to *Allah* propels Man, really, to break the shackles which servitude intensifies in Man. Moreover, being a slave to *Allah* means turning one's face to Him, the source of grace, and beauty and rightness. The soul yearns for such attributes and seeks to attain perfection and progresses towards them. They become the sublimest objective and the highest ideal of Man's thought and actions. The Muslim knows with certitude that his Creator owns the most glorious attributes. He is the Just, Merciful, Wise, Oft-returning to Mercy, Kind to His servants who sin, Truthful, etc.

Man works to reflect the coloring of these attributes on his life, and to build human society and relations on the basis of these attributes. Consequently, he objectifies justice, love, mercy and grace in his life.

Islamic rites of worhship have, moreover, educational and reformatory effects on the life of the individual and the group.

Supplication:

O Lord! Make us firm in monotheism throughout our life.

O Lord! Polytheism, like monotheism, has many branches. Being saved from polytheism is not possible but by Your Grace; envelop us in Your Mercy and Your Grace.

O Lord! Keep us alive with monotheism, put us in death with monotheism, and unite us on the Resurrection Day with the reality of monotheism.

The End
Sura Ikhlās
(Monotheism)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Falaq (The Daybreak)

No. 113 (5 Verses)

Contents and Virtue of the Sura:

Some commentators believe that this Sura is Meccan while some others know it to be Medinan.

The Sura contains some divine teaching commands to the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), in particular, and to all Muslims, in general, to seek refuge with *Allah* from every kind of ill arising from outer nature, dark and evil plotting and envy on the part of others.

Occasion of Revelation:

On the occasion of revelation of this Sura, there are some narrations cited in most of the commentary books to the effect that the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) was affected by some magic incantations, practiced by a few Jews, and became sick. Gabriel came down and indicated the place of the magic paraphernalia, which were hidden at the bottom of a well, by the Jews. They were taken out of the well and, then, these verses were recited and the physical condition of the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) improved.

But, the late Tabarsī and some other researchers reject these kind of narrations whose reference is limited to only Ibn-i-Abbās and ʿĀyishah, because:

Firstly, the Sura is popularly known as Meccan, and the tone of the verses are also similar to Meccan Suras, while the problems which the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) had, with the Jews, occured mostly in Medina, which is, itself, a testimony that these kinds of narrations are not correct.

Secondly, if the holy Prophet ***(p.b.u.h.)*** could, so easily, be affected by the witchcraft of sorcerers, so much so, that he became sick

and stayed in bed, it would have, also, been easy to stop him from reaching his great goal. Surely the Providence, Who had sent him for such a great and important mission, the Prophecy, protected him against the witchcraft of sorcerers.

Thirdly, if sorcery is to have had an effect on the body of the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*), then, people might imagine that witchcraft could affect his holy soul, too, and his thoughts would be subject to the witchcraft of sorcerers, so, this idea would destroy the principle of confidence in the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*).

The Holy Qur'an opposes the idea that the Prophet *(p.b.u.h.)* was bewitched: *"Or (why) has not a treasure been bestowed on him, or why has he (not) a garden for enjoyment? The wicked say: 'Ye follow none other than a man bewitched' ". "See what kind of comparisons they make for thee! But they have gone astray, and never a way will they be able to find! ".* (**Sura Furqān, No. 25, verses 8-9**).

Here, '*bewitched*', whether mentally or bodily, is a witness to our objective point.

However, with these very doubtful narrations, in regard to understanding the meaning of the verses, the sanctity of the position of the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) cannot be questioned.

The Virtue in Studying Sura Falaq:

On the virtue of this Sura, the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) is narrated to have said: *"Some verses have been revealed to me, the likes of which have not been revealed before; Sura Falaq and Sura Nās".* [1]

Another tradition from Imam Bāqir (*p.b.u.h.*) denotes: *"He who recites Suras Falaq, Nās, and Ikhlās, in his 'Watr* (odd number rak'at*) prayer', will be told, 'O servant of Allah, be happy that Allah accepted your 'Watr prayer' ".* [2]

Another narration says that the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) asked one of his companions whether or not he wished to be taught two Suras

1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 716, and Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 567.

2 Ibid.

which were the best Suras of the Qur'an and he answered: *"Yes, O Messenger of Allah";* then, the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) taught him Suras Falaq and Nās, then, he (*p.b.u.h.*) recited both of them in the morning prayer and told the man: *"Read them whenever you get up and whenever you go to bed."* [1]

It is clear that these virtues are for the person who harmonizes his own soul, mind, belief and actions with the content of the Sura.

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1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 716, and Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 567.

Sura Falaq
(The Daybreak)

No. 113 (verses 1-5)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ ٱلْفَلَقِ

٢ مِن شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

٣ وَ مِن شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ

٤ وَ مِن شَرِّ ٱلنَّفَّٰثَٰتِ فِى ٱلْعُقَدِ

٥ وَ مِن شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Say: I take refuge with the Lord of the dawn,"

2. "From the evil of what He has created,"

3. "And from the evil of the dark night when it comes,"

4. "And from the evil of those who blow on knots (practice Secret Arts),"

5. "And from the evil of the envious (one) when he envies."

Commentary:

I Take Refuge With the Lord of the Dawn.

In the first verse of the Sura, the holy Prophet, himself, *(p.b.u.h.)* as a model and leader, is addressed and the command is:

"Say: I take refuge with the Lord of the dawn,"

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"From the evil of what He has created,"

We should seek refuge with *Allah* from the evil of all wicked creatures, wicked men, Jinn, animals and evil happenings; and from the evil of the ' ***carnal soul*** '.

The term / falaq / is based on / falq / which originally means ' ***to split, to separate some from others, daybreak*** ' ; and since at the time of the appearance of daylight the black curtain of night breaks open, this word is used with the meaning of ' ***daybreak*** ', as well as, / fajr / which is used for the ' ***break of dawn*** '.

Some know the word with the meaning of ' ***the creation of all living creatures*** ' which includes men, animals and plants, because they come forth from splitting seeds, eggs, and the like, which is the most surprising stage of their existence. In fact, when it comes forth, a great change happens in that being and it transfers from one world to another. **Sura An'am, No. 6, verse 95** says: ***"It is Allah Who causeth the seed-grain and the date-stone to split and sprout. He causeth the living to issue from the dead, and He is the One to cause the dead to issue from the living. That is Allah; then how are ye deluded away from the truth?"***

Some have considered a broader meaning for / falaq / than what was said above. They think that its meaning covers any creation, in general, because it is by the creation of every being that the curtain of nothingness breaks and the light of existence appears.

Each of these three ideas is a surprising phenomenon which is an evidence for the greatness of *Allah*, its Creator. That *Allah* is qualified with this attribute conveys an intensely profound content and a wide ranging concept.

Some Islamic narrations denote that / falaq / is a well or a prison in Hell which appears clearly in the midst of it.

This narration may refer to one example out of its examples, but, it is not to limit the vast meaning of / falaq /, of course.

The phrase in the second verse does not mean that the divine creation, by itself, has an evil because creation is the same as existence and existing is absolute goodness. The Qur'an says: ***"He Who has made everything which He has created Most good..." (Sura Sajdah, No. 32, verse 7).***

Evil appears where the creatures diverge from the laws of creation and separate from the appointed path; for example, the sting (of insects) or the keen teeth of animals are their weapons to defend

themselves against their enemies, and, the same is true for the weapon we use against our enmies. If this weapon be used appropriately it is *'good'*, but if it be used inappropriately and against friends it is ' ***evil*** '.

Besides, there are many things that we, from their appearance, count as ' ***evil*** ', but they are, indeed, ' ***good***' like startling and warning events or infestations of pests, which awaken Man from the sleep of neglect and move him to seek the path of *Allah*, and they are certainly not ' ***evil*** '.

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Then, explaining and commenting on the subject, it says:

And from the evil of the dark night when it comes,"

The term / ġāsiq / is derived from / ġasaq / which, as Rāġib cites in Mufradāt, means ' ***The intense darkness of the night which appears at midnight'*** and that is why the Qur'an, referring to the end of the time of the sunset prayer, says: "***...till the darkness of the night...***" (**Sura Banī Isrā'īl, No. 17, verse 78**). Some books of lexicon have rendered the word / ġasaq / to mean ' ***the darkness of the beginning of the night*** ' which, regarding the root of the word, seems improbable; and it is certain that the darkness of the night becomes full when it rushes into the midnight. One of the concepts that is essential for this meaning is '***attack, or rush***'. So, it has been applied with this meaning, too.

Therefore, the term / ġāsiq /, in the verse under discussion, means either ' ***attacker*** ' or any ' ***evil creature*** ' that uses the cover of the darkness of the night to attack, because not only the wild and biting animals come out of their dens at night and cause damage, but also filthy, defiled persons often misuse the darkness of the night for their wicked aims.

The term / waqab / derived from / waqb / means ' ***hole, ditch*** ', so, its verb with the meaning of ' ***to enter into a hole*** ' has been used; or, it means ' ***to overspread*** '.

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"***And from the evil of those who blow on knots (practice Secret Arts),***"

The term / naffāθāt / is derived from / nafθ / which originally means '***to emit a little water out of the mouth***' and, since it is done by

blowing, the term has been applied with the meaning of ' ***to blow*** '.

But, many commentators have interpreted / naffāθāt / with the meaning of ' ***witches*** ' who blow on knots with a kind of incantation by which they practice sorcery, while some others have rendered the term in the sense of '***temptating women***' [1] , especially their own wives, who continuously murmur in the ears of men to weaken them from doing positive actions. Examples of these women are known in history.

Fakhr-i-Rāzī says that some women, to influence the affections of dignitaries' hearts, occupy their thoughts. [2] This idea is more apparent in our time than in olden times, because one of the most important means of spy-influence in statesmen and politicians, of the world, are women spies who, with their 'blowing on knots', and their constant temptation and communication, unlock the safes of secrets and obtain the most vital information and deliver it to the enemy.

Again, some have interpreted / naffāθāt / to mean '***mischievous souls***' or inciteful societies who loosen the 'knots' or decisions with their constant propagations.

Of course, it should be noted that, apart from the former occasions of revelation, there is no trace, in the verse, to show that it properly refers to the witchcraft of sorcerers, and supposing that the verse be rendered so, it is not an evidence that the occasion of revelation is right. It only denotes that the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) sought refuge to *Allah* from the evil of sorcerers, just like healthy people who seek refuge to *Allah* from the disease of cancer, though they have never been attacked by it.

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"And from the evil of the envious (one) when he envies"

This verse shows that envy is the worst and the most disgraceful quality of the wicked actions, because the Qur'an has counted it equal to the behaviour of savage animals, biting snakes, and tempter Satans.

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1 It must be noted, here, that this is a biased male opinion and not a statement from the Holy Qur'an. It would be just as possible to write 'temptating men'. In either case, it is an ignoble trait and highly discouraged in the Holy Qur'an.

2 Fakr-i-Rāzī Commentary, vol. 32, p. 196.

Explanations:

1. ***The Most Important Sources of Vice and Corruption.***

At the beginning of this Sura, the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) is bidden to take refuge with *Allah* from the evil of all creatures. Then, in its description three kinds of evil are pointed out: ***a***) the evil of '***the dark night when it comes***'; ***b***) the evil of '***those who blow on knots***' and loosen the decisions of faith, belief, and love and relations, with their temptations and evil communications; ***c***) the evil of the '***envious one***'.

From this short, but meaningful, explanation it is clearly understood that the main origins of evil are these three sources which should be noted, completely.

2. ***The Influence of Sorcery.***

The explanation about the reality of sorcery in old times and today, and the viewpoint of Islam on sorcery, and whether it is effective or not, is described by commenting on some other verses of the Qur'an, for example, **Sura Baqarah, No. 2, verses 102 and 103.** In those statements the effect of sorcery and witchcraft is somehow accepted, but, not in the form that some superstitious people talk about.

The point that should be mentioned, here, is that, on the one hand, when, in these verses, the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) is bidden to take refuge to *Allah* from the evil of the witchcraft of sorcerers, and the like, it does not mean that the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) has been bewitched by their evil arts; but, it is just that the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) takes refuge to *Allah* from any errancy or mistake and sin, i.e., he, under the light of *Allah's* Mercy, will be safe from the harm of those evils, and if it were not for the Mercy of *Allah*, the effect of witchcraft, on him, would be possible.

On the other hand, it was previously said that there is no evidence to support that the objective meaning of / naffāθāt - i - fil - ʿuqad / '***those who blow on knots***' refers to '***sorcerers***'.

3. ***The Evil of the Envious.***

Envy is a hideous, evil quality which comes forth due to different factors, such as, weakness in faith, the existence of miserliness in the unity of a person, and which demands or wishes the destruction of another person's blessing.

Envy is the origin of many great sins.

Envy, as mentioned in many Islamic narrations, eats away and destroys the faith of Man.

Imam Bāqir (*p.b.u.h.*) says: "***Verily, envy eats Faith as fire eats wood***".[1]

Another tradition from Imam Sādiq says: "***The decay of religion is envy, arrogance and pride***".[2]

This is because an envious person, in fact, protests the Divine Wisdom of why He has given such blessings to some people and has covered them under His Grace, as **Sura Nisā, No. 4, verse 54** says: "***Or do they envy mankind for what Allah hath given them of his bounty?...***".

For the reproach of envy, it is enough to mention, as an example, the first slaying that Man committed, in the world, where Cain killed his brother Abel, and the motive was envy.

The envious ones have always been one of the hindrances on the way of prophets and Saints, and that is why the Holy Qur'an commands the holy Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) '***to take refuge with the Lord of the dawn***'.

Though the holy Prophet, himself, (*p.b.u.h.*) is the addressee, in this Sura and the next one, certainly he is an example and all should take refuge with *Allah* from the evil of the envious ones.

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1 Bihār-ul-Anwār, vol. 73, p. 237

2 Ibid.

Supplication:

O Lord! We, too, seek refuge to You from the evil of the envious ones.

O Lord! We ask You to protect us from being envious of others, too.

O Lord! Keep us safe and sound from the evil of those who 'blow on knots' and from their temptations against the path of Justice and Truth.

The End
Sura Falaq
(The Daybreak)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Nās (Mankind)

No. 114 (6 Verses)

Contents of the Sura:

The human is always exposed to devilish temptations and the Satans, of Jinn and men, try to penetrate into his heart. The higher the standard of his knowledge and degree of his social position, the more intense the temptations of the Satans will be until they divert him from the straight way and send him astray.

This Sura commands the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), as a leader and as an example, to seek refuge with *Allah* from the evil of any temptations.

The content of this Sura corresponds with the previous one, **Sura Falaq**. The subject is supplementary to that of the previous Sura. In both of them, Man is asked to take refuge with *Allah* by using His name /rabb/, '***The Lord***' , with a difference that in **Sura Falaq** various kinds of external evil are mentioned, but in this Sura the evil of internal, hidden tempters is emphasized.

Opinions are divided as to whether this Sura is Meccan or Medinan, but the tone of the statements is more agreeable with other Meccan Suras.

Regarding the fact that this Sura and **Sura Falaq**, according to the Islamic narrations, have been revealed together, and in many commentators' opinions **Sura Falaq** is Meccan, this Sura can be considered Meccan, too.

The Virtue in Studying Sura Nās:

There are numerous traditions on the virtue of reciting this Sura; for example, a tradition says that the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) became gravely ill. Gabriel and Michael, two great angels of *Allah*, came to him. Gabriel sat beside the head of the holy Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***) and

Michael sat near his feet. Gabriel recited **Sura Falaq** and by it placed the Prophet (*p.b.u.h.*) in the refuge of *Allah* ; and Michael recited **Sura Nās.** [1]

In a tradition from Imam Bāqir (*p.b.u.h.*), which was formerly mentioned, it is said: " ***He who recites Sura Falaq, Nās, and Ikhlās in his ' Watr*** [2] ***prayer ', he will be told 'O servant of Allah, rejoice that Allah accepted your ' Watr prayer '.*** [3]

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1 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 7645, and Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 569.

2 ' watr ' means ' odd number rak'at '.

3 Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 7645, and Majma'-al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 569.

Sura Nās
(Mankind)

No. 114 (verses 1-6)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْم

١ قُلْ اَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ اَلنَّاسِ

٢ مَلِكِ اَلنَّاسِ

٣ اِلٰهِ اَلنَّاسِ

٤ مِنْ شَرِّ اَلْوَسْوَاسِ اَلْخَنَّاسِ

٥ اَلَّذِى يُوَسْوِسُ فِى صُدُورِ اَلنَّاسِ

٦ مِنَ اَلْجِنَّةِ وَ اَلنَّاسِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Mankind,"

2. "The King of Mankind,"

3. "The God of Mankind,"

4. "From the evil of the slinking whisperer,"

5. "Who whispers evil into the hearts of Mankind,"

6. "From among Jinn and Mankind."

Commentary:

I Take Refuge With the Lord of Mankind.

In this Sura, which is the last Sura of the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet (***p.b.u.h.***), again, is personally addressed, as an example to and a leader of people, and the command is:

"Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Mankind,"

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"The King of Mankind,"

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"The God of Mankind,"

It is interesting that, here, three attributes of the magnificent attributes of *Allah*; Lordship, Ownership, and Divinity, are emphasized, all of which are directly concerned with the training of Man, and his rescue from the grips of the tempters.

Of course, the objective of '***taking refuge with Allah***' is not that a person says this phrase merely with his tongue, but he should accomplish it with his thoughts, Faith, and actions. He should avoid devilish routes, devilish programs, devilish minds and communications, and devilish societies and meetings; and travel the divine paths; otherwise, the person who follows those devilish ways and lets himself fall into the hands of those temptations cannot be safe by only reciting this Sura.

With saying '***The Lord of Mankind***', he confesses His Lordship and places himself under His guidance.

By saying '***The King of Mankind***', he knows himself as His object, and His obedient servant.

By saying '***The God of Mankind***', he goes on the path of worshipping Him, and avoids worshipping others but Him. Undoubtedly, the person who is actually qualified with these three attributes, and truly believes in them, will be safe from the mischief of the tempters.

In fact, these three attributes are three important lessons of instruction and three means of rescue from the evil of temptations which keep Man safe.

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"From the evil of the slinking whisperer,"

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"Who whispers evil into the hearts of Mankind,"

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"From among Jinn and Mankind."

The term / waswās / has the infinitive meaning ' ***to tempt*** ' and sometimes it is used, as in this verse, with the subjective meaning, '***tempter***'.

The term /xannās/ is derived from /xunūs/ with the meaning of ' ***to gather, to remain behind*** ', and / xannās /, here, means ' ***Satan*** ' because he hides himself at the name of *Allah* and hiding is with the action of remaining behind, so, the word has been used in the sense of '***to hide***'.

Therefore, the meaning of the verses are: '***Say I take refuge with Allah from the devilish tempter who runs away and hides himself from the name of Allah***'.

Basically, the devilish ones act hiddenly, and sometimes they murmur temptations into our ears so that we believe that the ideas are our own thoughts. This very kind of thinking causes us to go astray.

The method of Satan is alluring and shows injustice in the form and under the guise of justice; lies inside a shell of truth; sin in the semblance of worship, and aberration in the appearance of guidance.

In short, they, themselves, and their affairs, both, are hidden, and this is a warning to all followers, of the right and the path of truth, not to expect to see Satans in their real form, or observe their activities in their true, crooked shape. No, it will never be so. They are '***slinking whisperers***' and their job is to plot, lie, be mischievous, be hypocritical, commit fraud and deceit, simulating truth, and hiding the right.

If they appear on the scene in their real form, if they do not mix wrong with right, and if they speak clearly and honestly, the truth would become apparent; as Hazrat Ali (***p.b.u.h.***) says: " ***The fact is, had falsehood been allowed to appear separately from truth, seekers of truth would have easily discerned it and would have kept away from falsehood...***". [1]

1 Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Sermon 50, (Arabic version).

They always take parts of truth and falsehood and mix them together to get control over people; as Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (*p.b.u.h.*), continuing the above sermon, says: "*...and Satan took advantage of this situation and gained complete control over the minds of its followers...*" [1]

The words ' ***whispers*** ' and ' ***hearts*** ' used in the verse: " ***Who whispers evil into the hearts of Mankind*** " are an emphasis on this idea.

All of these are on the one hand, and on the other hand the phrase: " ***From Jinn and Mankind*** " informs us that ' ***the slinking whisperer*** ' is not among only a group of people or a special class of Man with a particular sign, but they can be found here and there among Jinn and Man with any form and in any society. We should be careful of them and take refuge with *Allah* from the evil of all of them.

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Explanation:

Why Do We Take Refuge With Allah ?

At any moment it is possible that one may go astray, and when *Allah* bids His Apostle to take refuge with the Lord from the evil of the ' ***slinking whisperer*** ', it is an evidence that becoming involved in the trap of the tempters, who whisper evil in people's minds, is possible. So, everyone must seek refuge to *Allah*, with His name /rabb/, i.e., the Lord of Man, i.e., the Cherisher and Sustainer. By invoking this great attribute, Man can be hopeful and expect an especially particular retreat. Everyone should seek refuge with *Allah* as their King and Owner, invoking His authority over the affairs of Man, i.e., He is the One Who can independently act over His creation to seek the protection by invoking the divinity of the Lord as the God of Mankind, for it is His authority which must necessarily be obeyed, i.e., it is His command or His Will which is always done. Therefore, against the evil of these whisperers, there are heavenly angels, for the believing servants of *Allah* and seekers of Truth, to come to help them; as **Sura Fussilat, No. 41, verse 30** says: "*In the case of those who say: 'Our Lord is Allah', and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to time)...*".

1 Nahj-ul-Balāqa, Sermon 50, (Arabic Version).

But, in any case, we should never be proud and feel that we are not in need of the Divine lessons, admonishments and assistance. We should always take refuge with Him and be aware and prepared.

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Supplication:

O Lord! Protect us all from the evil of every tempter and dark inspiration.

O Lord! The trap is deep, the enemy is wakeful, his plots are hidden, and rescue is impossible but with Your Grace.

The End

Sura Nās

(Mankind)

An Expressive Tradition

عَنْهُ، عَنْ أَبِي الْجارُودِ قالَ: قُلْتُ لِأَبِي جَعْفَرٍ (ع): يَاابْنَ رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ هَلْ تَعْرِفُ مَوَدَّتِي لَكُمْ وَانْقِطاعِي إِلَيْكُمْ وَ مَوالاتِي إِيَّاكُمْ؟ قالَ: فَقالَ: نَعَمْ، قالَ: فَقُلْتُ: فَإِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مَسْأَلَةً تُجِيبُنِي فِيها فَإِنِّي مَكْفُوفُ الْبَصَرِ قَلِيلُ الْمَشْيِ وَلاٰ أَسْتَطِيعُ زِيارَتَكُمْ كُلَّ حِينٍ قالَ: هٰاتِ حاجَتَكَ، قُلْتُ: أَخْبِرْنِي بِدِينِكَ الَّذِي تَدِينُ اللّٰهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ بِهِ أَنْتَ وَ أَهْلُ بَيْتِكَ لِأَدِينَ اللّٰهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ بِهِ، قالَ: إِنْ كُنْتَ أَقْصَرْتَ الْخُطْبَةَ فَقَدْ أَعْظَمْتَ الْمَسْأَلَةَ، وَ اللّٰهِ لَأُعْطِيَنَّكَ دِينِي وَ دِينَ آبائِي الَّذِي نَدِينُ اللّٰهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ بِهِ: شَهادَةَ أَنْ لاٰ إِلٰهَ إِلاَّ اللّٰهُ، وَ أَنَّ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ (ص)، وَالْإِقْرارَ بِما جاءَ بِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِاللّٰهِ، وَالْوَلايَةَ لِوَلِيِّنا وَالْبَراءَةَ مِنْ عَدُوِّنا، وَالتَّسْلِيمَ لِأَمْرِنا، وَانْتِظارِ قائِمِنا، وَالْإِجْتِهادَ وَالْوَرَعَ

الكافي/١/٣٤

Abil-Jārūd said: " I asked Imam Bāqir *(a.s.)* whether he knew about my love and sincerity for him and he answered he did. Then, I said I had a question for him to answer me, for my eyes were blind and I scarcely walked, so I could not always go to visit him. He wanted me to express my question. I requested him that he informed me of the creed by which he and his household adored *Allah*, Almighty and Glorious, so that I could worship Him, too, by it. He responded:

' You asked a great thing, though you stated a short expression. By *Allah*, I give you (your answer of) my religion and the religion of my fathers by which we worship *Allah*, Almighty and Glorious. It is: the confession of faith that there is no god but *Allah*, that Muhammad ***(p.b.u.h.)*** is the Messenger of *Allah*, with affirmation that what has come to him (the Qur'ān) is from *Allah*, having affection for us and the lovers and obedients of us (Ahlul-Bayt) and hatred to our enemies, surrender to our cause, awaiting our Ghā'im (the twelveth Imam, for whom there is a domination that will come whenever *Allah* wills), and struggles (for establishing divine obligatories and lawful matters) and is pious, (he avoids unlawful things)'."

Al-Kāfī, vol. 1, p. 34

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❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

INDEX

A

Abrahah, p. 236.
Abraham, p. 146.
Abū-Jahl, p. 131, 132.
Abū-Lahab, p. 282-288.
'Ād, p. 11-13, 16.
'Ādiyāt, S. 100, p. 180.
'Alaq, S. 96, p. 121.❋
'Āsiyah, p. 15.
'Asr, S. 103, p. 211.

B

baby, p. 60.
backbiting, p. 223-225.
Balad, S. 90, p. 33.
Bayyinah, S. 98, p. 153.
Bilqīs, p. 280.

C

caliphate, p. 10.
clot, p. 122, 124, 127.

D

day, p. 72.
Duhā, S. 93, p. 84.

E

Earth, p. 56, 57, 151.
earthquake, p. 171, 172.
Eden, p. 13.
even, p. 6.
Ezra, p. 298.

F

Fajr, S. 89, p. 1.
Falaq, S. 113, p. 304.
Fātima, p. 90.
Fīl, S. 105, p. 233.

G

grave, p. 189.
guidance, p. 78.

H

Hamzah, p. 31.
Humazah, S. 104, p.221.

I

Ikhlās, S. 112, p. 290.
Inshirāh, S. 94, p. 100.
intention, p. 166.
Iram, p. 12.

J

Jamh, p. 39.
Jesus, p. 298.

K

Kāfirūn, S. 109, p. 266.
Kauthar, S. 108, p. 257.
Ka'ba, p. 37.
Khadījah, p. 95.

L

Lahab, S. 111, p. 282.
Lail, S. 92, p. 68.
Left Hand, p. 49.

M

Mā'ūn, S. 107, p. 249.
Mecca, p. 36, 275.
monotheism, p. 158,159, 166,273,290-303.

N

Najāshī, p. 235.
Nās, S. 114, p. 314.
Nasr, S. 110, 275.
night, p. 71, 88.
Nimrod, p. 146.
Noah, p. 12.

O

odd, p. 6.
orphans, p. 20-22, 92,93,96,249.

P

palm, p. 70,71.
pen, p. 126.
Pharaoh, p. 14.
❋ prostration, p. 134,136.

Q

Qadr, S. 97, p. 139.
Qāri'ah, S. 101, p. 192.
Quraish, S.106, p. 244.

INDEX-continued

R

repentance, p. 177.
Resurrection, p. 25.
Right Hand, p. 48,490.

S

Sālih, p. 13,62-67.
Salmān-Farsī, p. 288.
Serene Soul, p. 2,29,30.
Shaddād's Paradise, p. 13.
Shahādatain Testimony, p. 74.
Shams, S. 91. p. 51.
Shem, p. 12.
Shī'ah, p. 166.
Sīnā, p. 115.
soul, p. 57.
stake, p. 14,15.
Sun, p. 53,54.
supplications, pp. 32,50,67,83, 99,111,120,138,151,167,179,191, 199,210,220,232,243,248,256,265, 274,281,289,303,313,320.

T

Takāthur, S. 102. p. 200.
Ten Nights, p. 5.
Thamood, p. 13-16, 62, 64-66.
Tīn, S. 95. p. 114.
traditions, pp. 1,2,14,17,20,26,27,31, 34,39,40,43,46,51,59,60,61,63,64,68, 71,82,87,95,98,108,112,117,120,121, 123,135,139,143,145,149,153,169,173, 174,178,188,198,199,201,205,206,207, 209,211,215,221,230,231,233,234,235, 253,254,255,258,260,266,267,269,272, 276,282,286,288,290,291,292,294,296, 297,298,299,300,305,312,315,318,319.

U

Umm-i-Jamīl, p. 285,287.

V

verses, pp. 3,10,11,18,24,29, 35,41,44,45,52,53,62,69,70,77, 78,86,92,102,103,113,114,122, 129,130,134,141,154,155,160, 170,171,182,183,193,194,202, 203,212,222,223,234,250,259, 268,277,284,293,307,316.

W

wealth, p. 39,75,225,227.
watr, p. 305, 315.

Y

Yābis, p. 183.

Z

Zilzāl, S. 99. p. 169.
Zu-Nūwas, p. 235.

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